

Home of the Brave Memorial Day Program

NATIONAL MEMORIAL CEMETERY OF ARIZONA

May 27, 2024 | 8 AM

NATIONAL MEMORIAL CEMETERY OF ARIZONA HISTORY

In 1926, Mr. Ivan Williams a long-time member of the American Legion contacted U.S. Senator Henry F. Ashurst about another National Veterans' Cemetery in Arizona. In the following years hundreds of veterans joined in the effort to accomplish this task, but their efforts were in vain due to the fact that the National Cemetery in Prescott was still open for burials.

In 1970, Department Commanders of the three major Veterans Service Organizations, with the full support of their predecessors and membership, pledged to establish a State Veterans Cemetery to become a National Cemetery.

A corporation was formed to acquire land for this purpose. Phoenix attorney Anthony O. Jones was named the corporation attorney responsible for drafting the petition and guiding it through proper channels. Land Commissioner Andrew L. Bettwy diligently worked with the corporate leaders. A section of land was eventually located in Phoenix at Cave Creek and Pinnacle Peak Roads, deemed acceptable on a lease fee basis.

The commanders presented the information to their organizations. They requested approval for an obligation of the organizations to pay lease fees on the full section of land while seeking a governing authority.

A State Law was passed in 1976 and signed by Governor Raul Castro authorizing the development of up to 640 acres for a Veterans Cemetery with \$50,000 appropriated. Seventeen acres of the leased land were conveyed to the Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES), with 12 and a half acres to be developed initially.

The Arizona Veterans' Memorial Cemetery was dedicated on December 9, 1978, with the first burials occurring on March 14, 1979. Funds of \$291,700 were received from the U. S. Veterans' Administration Federal-State Matching Funds Grant Program for construction improvements. The State Legislature created the Arizona Veterans' Service Commission (AVSC) in 1982, and the cemetery operation was transferred to AVSC from DES.

In 1985, an additional two hundred twelve acres were conveyed to the AVSC, bringing the cemetery acreage to 225 acres. In 1988 the legislature appropriated \$300,000 for capital improvements, and additional modifications were authorized and completed through donated funds from veterans, fraternal, and other service organizations.

The cemetery with burial space available for 200,000 graves was transferred to the Veterans Cemetery Administration on April 1, 1989. The three Department Commanders were Disabled American Veterans Commander George E. Egel, Veterans of Foreign Wars Commander Charles "Chuck" G. Hastings, and American Legion Commander James J. Murphy.

The National Memorial Cemetery of Arizona will not reach capacity until well after 2030. The Department of Veterans Affairs spent over \$13 million on improvements in 1999. The project included three new committal shelters, a maintenance building, a visitor center, a founders plaza, an assembly area, columbaria, and extensive landscaping.

Monuments and Memorials

There are 18 monuments and memorials at the National Memorial Cemetery of Arizona, most arranged along a memorial walkway. Two unique memorials at the cemetery are the Eternal Flame monument, which is pyramidal, and the World War II Submarine Torpedo monument.





Randy Heard

National Memorial Cemetery of Arizona, Director Randy Heard

Randy Heard was named Director of the National Memorial Cemetery of Arizona (NMCA) in Phoenix, Arizona, effective February 28, 2021. As Director, he is responsible for the oversight of all burial, maintenance, and administrative operations at the cemetery. Mr. Heard is also the Director overseeing Prescott National Cemetery operations in Prescott, Arizona.

Before his leadership in Arizona, Heard was the Director of Bakersfield National Cemetery in Arvin, California. He began his career with the National Cemetery Administration (NCA) in February 2009 at Riverside National Cemetery as a Cemetery Caretaker. He was promoted to Cemetery Caretaker Leader in May 2010 and again to Cemetery Caretaker Supervisor in September 2010.

Before joining NCA, Heard retired after serving more than 20 years in the United States Navy. He served in Operations Desert Shield, Desert Storm, Enduring Freedom, and Iraqi Freedom. In the Navy, he served as an Aircraft Director/Aircraft Handler, Aircraft Rescue, Firefighting and Salvage Specialist, and Law Enforcement Specialist.



Katie Hobbs

Governor Katie Hobbs

Governor Katie Hobbs was elected on November 15, 2022, as Arizona’s 24th governor. As a social worker and manager of a domestic violence shelter, Governor Hobbs saw firsthand the price Arizonans pay when their elected leaders fail to address the problems people face daily. Frustrated with the lack of leadership, Governor Hobbs decided to run for office as an elected official. She used her experience as a social worker to take on Arizona’s toughest challenges.

She worked with both parties in the legislature to expand health care to over 500,000 Arizonans. She worked across the aisle to find new ways to tackle the growing opioid epidemic here in Arizona.

When Governor Hobbs became Secretary of State in 2018, she modernized the office, fixed broken systems, battled misinformation, and navigated the pandemic.

She attended Northern Arizona University and graduated from Arizona State University with a master’s degree in Social Work. She is a mother to Sam and Hanna and is a native Arizonan, having been born in Tempe.



Marshall Trimble

Marshall Trimble, U.S. Marine Corps Veteran, State Historian, Author and Singer

In February 1957, Marshall Trimble joined the United States Marine Corps. Inspired by a Marine buddy, he purchased his first guitar in 1958 and taught himself to play while listening to records by Johnny Cash, Elvis, and Buddy Holly.

After discharge from the Marines, Trimble went to college and graduated from Arizona State University in 1961. Two years later, he was touring with the Gin Mill Three, a folk group performing Kingston Trio-inspired music. During his travels, he visited a variety of historical sites and museums. While visiting the Little Big Horn Battlefield in Montana in 1968, Trimble decided to become a Western historian and writer.

In 1972, Trimble was entrusted with a significant task-to create an Arizona history class at Scottsdale Community College. His dedication and expertise quickly made the class one of the largest at the college. In 1977, he took on the role of director of the school’s Southwest Studies program, further enriching the educational landscape. His unique approach to promoting his first book in 1977, using his guitar and songs, added a lively touch to promotional book readings.

Trimble’s contributions have not gone unnoticed. His work has been celebrated with numerous honors. In 1997, Governor Fife Symington bestowed upon him the title of Official State Historian. In 2000, he was chosen as one of Arizona’s representatives in the Library of Congress “Local Legacies,” a testament to the impact of his work.





Diana Pike

Keynote Speaker, U.S. Army (Ret.) Sergeant First Class Diana Pike

Sergeant First Class Diana Pike, a beacon of resilience, retired from the Army in 1988 after serving in Signal Intelligence.

In 1993, a tragic car accident left Diana without the love of her life, Michael, and fending on her own to raise two young children, Christian and Denise. Pike, a mother driven by a fierce dedication, ensured her son and daughter were well educated. Her daughter Denise, a testament to her mother’s commitment, went to Xavier College Prep and ASU, graduating with honors. She later became an apprentice tattoo artist and now hones her trade in Northern California.

Pike taught Christian the things she imagined he would have learned from his father, Michael, like shooting and working on cars. She also sent him to “Outward Bound” each summer to bond with others and push his limits. She beamed, “He never doubted himself. He felt he was capable of anything.”

Christian enlisted in the U.S. Navy in 2001 and was also drawn to intelligence. In March 2013, he was mortally wounded during a fierce gun battle in Afghanistan. Diana found herself in Germany again, but this time in Landstuhl, to say goodbye to her only son, Cryptologist Tech Chief Christian Pike. “It never occurred to me that he wouldn’t come home—until I got that phone call.” The Gold Star Mom said her son loved his life, and she’s grateful they left nothing unsaid.

Diana Pike earned her undergraduate degree from Hood College and her graduate degree from Western International in Phoenix. She retired from FOX News after 21 years as a Regional Director for Human Resources.



Jim Symonds

Admiral Jim Symonds

Rear Admiral Jim Symonds is a retired veteran who has 35 years of service in the U.S. Navy. He was a Naval Flight Officer and Naval Aviator with 18 years of flying service in three operational A-6 Intruder squadrons with deployments on four different aircraft carriers.

As a Flag Officer, he was first assigned to the Chief of Naval Operations Staff in Washington, DC, where he was the Navy’s Director of Environmental Readiness (N45).

As Commanding Officer of the USS Ronald Reagan, he was invited to render the honors of the casket flag of President Ronald Reagan to his wife Nancy Reagan.

His last tour of duty was as Commander, Navy Region Northwest in Silverdale, WA. He oversaw 3,000 Sailors and civilians, providing strategic planning and daily operations at four central Navy installations in Washington state.



Dale Villani

Dale Villani

Dale Villani is the President of the Board of Honoring America’s Veterans (HAV), a local nonprofit that hosts large-scale special events to pay tribute to our nation’s veterans. Some of their events include the Phoenix Veterans Day Parade, now in its 28th year, the Commemorating Pearl Harbor Day Ceremony, the Honor Our Heroes Veterans Grand Marshals program, and, new this year, the Memorial Day Program in partnership with the VA.

Dale brings a wealth of experience to his role. With over 43 years of healthcare leadership under his belt, Dale has served in various capacities, including at Aetna, Sun Health Corporation, Dignity Health, and Magellan Health Services. His career also includes a distinguished tenure as a lieutenant colonel with the U.S. Air Force Medical Service Corps. Dale’s academic achievements are equally impressive, with an MBA from Penn State and a lifetime Fellowship with the American College of Healthcare Executives.

Dale and his wife Amy live in Scottsdale and have two daughters, a grandson, and two rescue dogs. In his spare time, Dale enjoys outdoor activities, including golf, hiking, and fishing.





Rick Romley

Master of Ceremonies: Judge of the Veteran’s Court, Rick Romley

Rick Romley served four elected terms as the Maricopa County Attorney [1989-2004] and was appointed interim Maricopa County Attorney in 2010. He has testified before the United States Senate and the United States House of Representatives on the issues of violent crime, terrorism, drug trafficking, youth violence, public corruption, and victims’ rights. During his stellar career as County Attorney, he earned over 100 awards.

Romley joined the United States Marine Corps as a combat infantry squad leader in Vietnam until wounded in 1969. He received numerous commendations, including the Purple Heart. In 2001, Romley received two additional National Awards for his service in defense of our country: Life’s Presidential Unsung Hero Award and America’s Outstanding Disabled American Veteran of the Year.

Romley was inducted into the Arizona Veterans Hall of Fame in 2007. Romley and his wife, Carol, live in Scottsdale, Arizona.

Honoring America's VETERANS

Join us in our journey to thank our veterans, honor them, and recognize them for defending the freedoms we enjoy.

honoringamericaveterans.org

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Opening doors to care for our nation’s heroes.

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NATIONAL MEMORIAL CEMETERY OF ARIZONA MEMORIAL DAY PROGRAM

“God Bless America”

CW3 Steven Brining
108th Army National Guard Band

FLY OVER

Kurt Gearhart and the Phoenix Stearman Group

MASTER OF CEREMONIES

Rick Romley – U.S. Marine Corps Veteran –
Vietnam War

INTRODUCTION OF DISTINGUISHED GUESTS

POSTING OF THE COLORS

Luke Air Force Base Honor Guard

THE NATIONAL ANTHEM

108th Army National Guard Band
Commanded by CW3 Steven Brining

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Gold Star Mom Tammy Pulaski, and Blue Star Mom
Theresa Koontz

INVOCATION

Chaplain Col. Daniel J. Butler, USA (Ret.)
Phoenix VA Health Care System

DIRECTOR’S GREETING

Randy Heard, Director
National Memorial Cemetery of Arizona

PARADE OF COLORS

- Armed Forces Color Guards
- Veteran Service Organizations
- JROTC Unit and Community Groups

INTRODUCTION OF THE GOVERNOR

Lt. Col. Dale Villani, USAF (Ret.), LFACHE, President,
Honoring America’s Veterans

GOVERNOR’S REMARKS AND PRESENTATION OF THE PROCLAMATION

Governor Katie Hobbs

ARMED FORCES MEDLEY

108th Army National Guard Band

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

U.S. Army Specialist First Class, Diana Pike, VFW Post
2135 Trustee, Gold Star Mom

13 FOLDS

Recited by U.S. Navy Admiral (Ret.) Jim Symonds
Performed by the Luke Air Force Base Honor Guard

RAGGEDY OLD FLAG

State Historian Marshall Trimble, Vietnam Veteran

BENEDICTION

Chaplain Col. Daniel J. Butler, USA (Ret.)
Phoenix VA Health Care System

RIFLE VOLLEY

Arizona Army National Guard Military Honor Guard

TAPS

SPC Giovanni Pierson

GOD BLESS THE USA – DISMISSAL

108th Army National Guard Band

*Our thoughts and prayers are also with the families of
the men and women who served or are serving in our
armed forces.*



★ ★ ★ ★ ★
THE U.S. ARMY SONG

Over hill, over dale, we have hit the dusty trail
 And the Army goes rolling along.
 In and out, hear them shout
 Counter march and right about
 And the Army goes rolling along.
 Then it's Hi! Hi! Hey! The Army's on the way
 Sound off your numbers loud and strong.
 For where e'er you go, you will always know
 That the Army goes rolling along.



★ ★ ★ ★ ★
**SEMPER SUPRA, SPACE FORCE HYMN
 (ALWAYS ABOVE)**

We're the mighty watchful eye,
 Guardians beyond the blue,
 The invisible front line,
 Warfighters brave and true.
 Boldly reaching into space, there's no limit to our sky.
 Standing guard both night and day,
 We're the Space Force from on high.



★ ★ ★ ★ ★
ANCHORS AWEIGH, U.S. NAVY

Anchors Aweigh my boys,
 Anchors Away
 Farewell to college joys,
 We sail at break of day ay, ay, ay!
 Through our last night on shore,
 Drink through the foam,
 Until we meet once more
 Here's wishing you a happy voyage home.



★ ★ ★ ★ ★
SEMPER PARATUS, COAST GUARD

(Always Ready)
 We're always ready for the call,
 We place our trust in thee.
 Through howling gale and shot and shell,
 To win our victory. "Semper Paratus" is our guide,
 Our pledge, our motto too,
 We're "Always Ready" do or die! HEY!
 Coast Guard we fight for you!



★ ★ ★ ★ ★
THE U.S. MARINE CORPS' HYMN

From the halls of Montezuma
 To the shores of Tripoli
 We fight our country's battles,
 In the air, on land, and at sea;
 First to fight for rights and freedom
 And to keep our honor clean
 We are proud to claim the title
 of United States Marine.



★ ★ ★ ★ ★
**HEAVE HO! MY LADS, HEAVE HO!
 MERCHANT MARINES**

Heave Ho! My lads, heave ho!
 It's a long, long way to go,
 It's a long, long pull with our hatches full
 Braving the wind, braving the sea,
 Fighting the treacherous foe,
 Heave Ho! My lads, heave ho!
 Let the sea roll high or low,
 We can cross any ocean
 Sail any river, give us the goods, and we'll deliver
 Damn the submarine! We're the men of
 The Merchant Marine!



★ ★ ★ ★ ★
THE AIR FORCE HYMN

Off we go into the wild blue yonder
 Climbing high into the sun;
 Here they come,
 Zooming to meet our thunder
 At 'em boys, give 'er the gun.
 Down we dive,
 Spouting our flame from under
 Off with one hell of a roar!
 We live in fame, or go down in flame,
 Hey! Nothing can stop the U.S. Air Force



*This activity supports the U.S. military and its veterans;
 however, it is not officially connected to or endorsed by
 the U.S. Department of Defense or any of its branches.*

The Memorial Day Committee wishes to recognize the following:

MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENTS from the State of Arizona

- William Alchesay, Indian Wars*
- Oscar Austin, Vietnam War*
- Nicky Bacon, Vietnam War*
- William Croft Barnes, Indian Wars*
- Blanquet, Indian War*
- Benjamin Brown, Buffalo Soldier*
- Trustrim Connell, Civil War*
- Bruce Crandall, Vietnam War
- Chiquito, Indian Wars*
- Kern Dunagan, Vietnam War*
- Elsatsoosh, Indian Wars*
- Fred Ferguson, Vietnam War
- Joe Foss, World War II*
- Raymond Harvey, Korean War*
- Silvestre Herrera, World War II*
- Bernard John Dowling Irwin, Indian Wars*
- Jim, Indian Wars*
- Jose Jimenez, Vietnam War*
- Kelsa, Indian Wars*
- Kosoha, Indian Wars*
- Billy Lauffer, Vietnam War*
- Frank Luke, Jr, World War II*
- Machol, Indian Wars*
- Isaiah Mays, Indian Wars*
- William McBryer, Indian Wars*
- Manuel V. Mendoza, World War II
- Nannasaddie, Indian Wars*
- Nantaje (Nantahe), Indian Wars*
- John Pruitt, World War I*
- Rowdy, Indian Wars*
- Robert S. Scott, Indian Wars*
- Cornelius Smith, Indian Wars*
- Simon Suhler, Indian Wars*
- Max Thompson, World War II*
- Leo Thorsness, Vietnam War*
- Jay Vargas, Vietnam War
- Leonard Wood, Indian Wars*

*Indicates deceased

Special acknowledgment is given to the National Memorial Cemetery of Arizona staff

- Randy Heard
- Cheryl Black
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- Paul Blomkvist
- Jaime Carvajal
- Lee Castaneda
- Michael Castillo
- Tyler Colly
- Michael Crinigan
- Ronald Gallagher
- Adrian Garcia
- Charles Hayes
- Charles Holden
- Daniel Humbles
- Robert Jones
- Rebecca Litgen
- Jeremy Mattas
- John Mcavey
- John Moore
- Valyrie Murray
- Matthew Nelson
- Timothy Newman
- Jerald Nowdomski
- Ryan O'donnell
- Randall Petersen
- Mark Raines
- Michael Reavis
- Clay Redfield
- Eric Russell
- Jeremy Spradling
- Cecilio Suguitan
- David Tindel
- Edwardo Tsosie
- Scott Worden
- Gregory Yazzie

Sincere appreciation to the following Honor Guards and Ritual Teams that ensure our veterans receive those honors so richly earned:

- 161st Air Refueling Wing
- Luke Air Force Base Honor Guard
- Marine Corps Honor Guard
- American Legion Ritual Team
- Arizona Army National Guard Honor Guard
- Naval Reserve Honor Guard
- National Memorial Cemetery Ladies

Special Acknowledgments:

- American Medical Response Ambulance Service
- Arizona Heroes to Hometown
- Arizona Riders
- CW7
- Disabled American Veterans, Auxiliary Unit 20
- Legion Guard Riders
- Level Up Print
- Maricopa County Sheriff's Office
- Medtronic
- Phoenix Elks Lodge 335
- Reddy Ice
- Stearman Aviation Group
- TriWest Healthcare Alliance
- U.S. Navy Sea Cadets
- Veterans Heritage Project

Special thanks to all the volunteers who assist us with the flag placements, retrievals, sorting and rolling. We are grateful for your support.

Honoring America's Veterans and VA Memorial Day Program Committee

- Randy Heard
- Rick Romley
- Jerald Nowdomski
- Theresa Koontz
- Tammy Pulaski
- Aaron Marquez
- Tim Stringham
- Michael Burke
- Michele DeVore
- Lee Castaneda
- Paul Blomkvist
- Jeremy Spradling
- Paula Pedene

Color Guards

- Arizona Society of the Sons of the American Revolution
- Arizona State Society Daughters of the American Revolution
- Marine Corps League - Old Breed Detachment # 767
- Sky Harbor Composite Squadron 301
- Women's Army Corps Veterans' Assn.-Army Women United, Saguro Chapter 68

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"HONORING THOSE WHO SACRIFICED EVERYTHING"

ARIZONA CW7

We are proud to partner with Honoring America's Veterans and the VA National Cemetery of Arizona in providing live television coverage of today's ceremony. Together, we honor the brave military men and women who sacrificed their lives for our great nation.

**D-DAY
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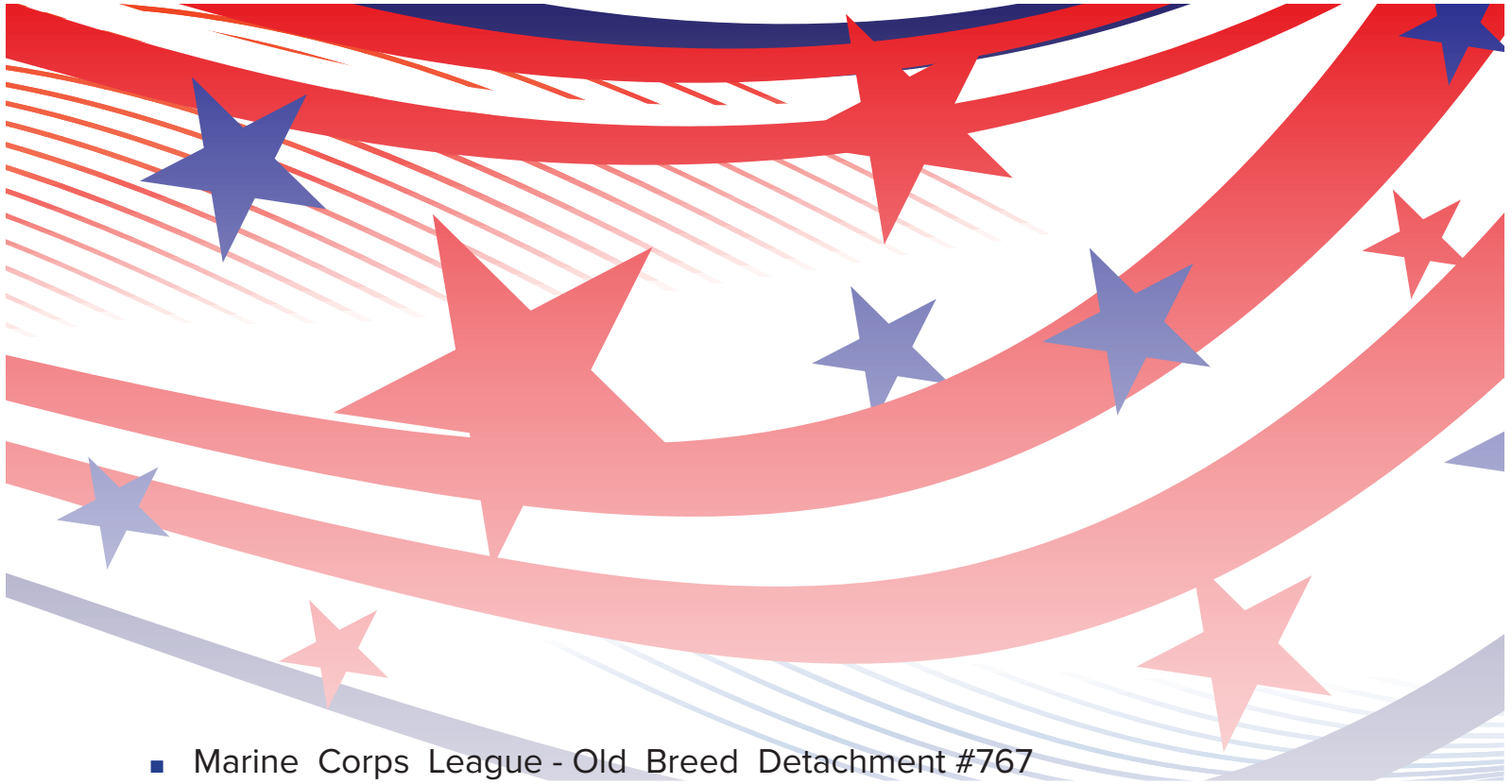
ARIZONA CW7



Wreath Placements

- Air Force Sergeants Association Chapter 1260
- All-Star United States - Mrs Arizona 2024, April Lynch
- American Gold Star Mothers of Arizona
- American Legion Pat Tillman Post 117
- Anasazi Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution
- Arizona Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA)
- Arizona State Society Daughters of the American Revolution
- Arizona Veterans Hall of Fame Society
- Association of the US Army-AZ Territorial Chapter
- Association of the US Navy, Phoenix Saguaro Chapter
- Benevolent Protection Order of Elks Chapter #2429
- Blue Star MOMS of the Southwest Valley
- Christopher J Lapka American Legion Post 105
- DAV Auxiliary Unit 20
- Department of Arizona Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary
- Desert Mariners
- Fleet Reserve Association Branch 163
- Francis Family
- Korean War Veterans - Arden A. Rowley Chapter 122
- Ladies Auxiliary of the Fleet Reserve Association Unit 163





- Marine Corps League - Old Breed Detachment #767
- Patriots and Vietnam Veterans Korean Association in Arizona
- Phoenix Elks Lodge 335
- Salt River Unit 155 of Military Women Across the Nation
- Sky Harbor Composite Squadron 301
- Tempe Elks Lodge #2251
- The American Legion, Department of Arizona
- The Arizona Korean Association
- The Arizona Korean Veterans Association
- The Vietnamese Community of AZ
- The Vietnamese Veterans Association of AZ
- Twenty and Four Honor Society Women Legionnaires
- United States Submarine Veterans Inc. - Perch Base
- US Submarine Veterans of WWII - Memorial Presentation by USSVI Perch Base
- Veterans Heritage Project
- Veterans of Foreign Wars Department of Arizona and Auxiliary
- Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 9400
- Women's Army Corps Veterans' Assn.-Army Women United, Saguaro Chapter 68
- Woodmen Life Phoenix Chapter 117



United States Department of Veterans Affairs
National Memorial Cemetery of Arizona
23029 N. Cave Creek Road, Phoenix, AZ 85024
cem.va.gov/cems/nchp/nmca.asp



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