

Email REPORT received 1 June 2015 from MOPH Chapter 572 Sr. Vice Commander Christopher Vedvick.

Sub: MOPH Department of Arizona Convention, Sun City, AZ

Patriots,

This weekend I represented our Chapter at the Department of Arizona Convention in Sun City, Arizona. I wanted to give you all a back brief on what transpired at the convention this year. There were several speakers at this years convention as well as discussions on some key issues that impact our Chapter.

Some of the speakers included:

MOPH National Service Director, Frank Van Hoy, who complimented the Department of Arizona on it's aggressive pursuit this past year getting every single county in Arizona proclaimed a Purple Heart County. Santa Cruz County will be the final piece of the puzzle which will happen this Wednesday June 3rd in Nogales. He also echoed Chapter 572 and 442's concerns about branding the image of the MOPH and open communication between Chapters and Departments. Stating how critical it is to the future of our organization.

Interim Director of the Phoenix VA Health Care System, Glen Grippen, also spoke at the convention. He spoke about the hard work being done to change the culture at the VA and how the media often highlights the negative reports rather than any success that the VA has. He realizes that there is a long way to go and a lot of work to be done but he believes that the VA is now on the right track to get there. Many Members brought up the fact that they had positive interactions with providers but negative experiences with administrators or facilities. He acknowledged that and spoke about an upcoming program called "Truth Point" which will replace the current "Tell It To The Director" program. Truth Point is an electronic recognition program that will be available at kiosks around a VA campus for Veterans to acknowledge great care they received. Currently you must go to PAD and fill out a Tell it to the Director paper in order to accomplish the same thing. This allows the good providers to receive recognition that goes in their official file.

Other Reports:

Service Officer:

The Department Service Officer is looking to present awards for outstanding healthcare providers (physicians, nurses, etc.) this year. If you know of a healthcare provider that has been helpful or an advocate for Combat Wounded Veterans please bring them to our attention so we can get them recognized for their efforts.

Other Issues:

Purple Heart Proclamations:

All Counties in Arizona will be proclaimed Purple heart Counties by this Wednesday. After which we will approach the Governor and ask that he proclaim Arizona a Purple Heart State. This will be the first time any state has secured all the counties in the state prior to getting the state's proclamation. The Purple Heart Magazine has already stated that they would use any photo of the event for their cover. The Department Commander was proud of every Chapter's efforts to get their areas made into Purple Heart cities and counties. However, he stated that the onus for Purple Heart cities is still on the Chapters. I spoke at length about making each proclamation a big event, not just some guy going into a City Council Chamber to pick up a proclamation or receiving one in the mail. By taking the time to add some pageantry and circumstance to the occasion we help honor and bring recognition to those who have fallen in battle and sacrificed so much for our country.

Fundraising:

The Department has decided to focus on fundraising opportunities instead of asking for money from each Chapter. Their initial fundraising idea was to mimic our Top Gun events since those have been so successful. However, the Department did not want to compete with our Top Gun 7 this fall nor could they schedule a range in the spring to host the event. So the Department settled on a Purple Heart Classic Golf Tournament in the Scottsdale area. They will try to have the event in the spring of 2015.

Branding:

A committee was formed in order to research and present to the Department what opportunities are available for the Department to increase its market presence. Currently the Department of Arizona does not have a website, Facebook page, Twitter account or PayPal account in order to receive donations. I am serving on that committee and I plan to have a comprehensive campaign plan in place by the next DEC meeting.

Elections:

The following officers were elected this year for the Department of Arizona:

Commander: Billy Weldon
Senior Vice Commander: Woody Glaudel
Junior Vice Commander: Christopher Vedvick
Finance Officer: David Sas
Judge Advocate: Peter Haas
Sergeant at Arms: Frank Giroux
State Inspector: Mark Browne
Finance Committeemen: Ron Capek, Joe Tidwell, Sal Salinas

National Convention:

The MOPH National Convention in Las Vegas is coming up this August. The current National Senior Vice Commander, Robert Puskar, is going to be the next National Commander. Bob is from our Department and a former Department Commander. There will be a lot of Region 6 support at this convention as most Chapters are taking vans up to the event. If you haven't reserved your hotel for the convention you need to do so quickly as they are filling up. Information can be found in your Purple Heart Magazine.

Overall it was a great convention and we made a lot of progress. I'll be posting pictures and videos that I took during the Convention on our Facebook page very soon. Keep your eyes peeled for that. For those in the local area I'll see you all on Wednesday for the Santa Cruz County Purple Heart Proclamation.

Yours in patriotism,

Christopher Vedvick
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