

To ensure that Arizona's veteran community is kept "up to date" on what is happening with the Arizona Department of Veterans' Services (ADVS), we offer this monthly update sent out to our veteran contacts throughout the State of Arizona. Please visit our website at azdvs.gov

Please forward and share with any interested veterans.

YUMA STATE VETERAN HOME TO BECOME A REALITY

The \$9.2 million Governor Jan Brewer placed in her budget for an Arizona State Veteran Home – Yuma was a part of the budget passed this session by the Arizona State Legislature.

ADVS is putting the process in motion, but, as of yet, it's too early to come up with a "hard" timeline for the new home.

SOUTHWEST DEFENSE ALLIANCE

Also included in the final budget is \$25,000 as Arizona's contribution to the Southwest Defense Alliance (SWDA).

The Southwest Defense Alliance is a public benefit corporation formed in 1998 that works to preserve and enhance critical defense missions and assets in the southwestern United States. These significant operational, training and testing assets are linked by unique communications and satellite systems enabling them to work together in many ways. SWDA engages in communication efforts to ensure that local, state and federal elected officials in Arizona, California, Nevada, New Mexico, Texas, and Utah have the information needed to be effective advocates.

SWDA focus for 2014-15 is to (1) help organize Arizona as well as all six states into positions to protect/secure our installations and ranges in the face of a BRAC, and (2) continue to inform and educate on the implications of DOD budget cuts, force shaping and Sequestration (which is still a law and comes back in full force in 2016).

END OF LEGISLATIVE SESSION

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The Arizona Legislature adjourned on Thursday, 24 April 2014.

Veteran/Military bills that passed this session are:

SB 1040- leave of absence; auxiliary members NOW: auxiliary members; leave of absence

Will authorize leaves of absence for training purposes for public employees who are members of an "auxiliary of the Armed Forces of the United States" such as the Coast Guard Auxiliary or the Civil Air Patrol.

Original Sponsor: Sen. Nancy Barto, R-Dist. 15

SB 1099- Navajo code talkers' day

Will place in statute that each August 14th is Navajo Code Talkers' Day, not a legal holiday.

Original Sponsor: Sen. Carlyle Begay, D-Dist. 7; et al

SB 1312- Vietnam veterans' day

Will recognize each 29 March as "Vietnam Veterans Day" in Arizona, not a legal holiday. Would supersede a concurrent resolution passed in 2010 and place the recognition in statute so the Legislature does not have to pass such a bill each year to recognize the day. Twenty-nine March 1973 was the date that U.S. ground forces were removed from RVN under the Paris Peace Accords.

Original Sponsor: Sen. Al Melvin, R-Dist. 11

SB 1313- Arizona gold star military medal

Authorizes the creation of the Arizona Gold Star Military Medal to recognize and be awarded to Arizona servicemembers killed in the line of duty or in support of combat operations since Arizona became a state on 14 Feb 1912.

Original Sponsor: Sen. Al Melvin, R-Dist. 11

SB 1401- United States submarine memorial

Authorizes the building of a memorial dedicated to United States submarine veterans in Wesley Bolin Plaza at the State capitol.

Original Sponsor: Sen. Al Melvin, R-Dist. 11

SCR 1008- commendation; Davis-Monthan air force base NOW: support; military installations

A concurrent resolution recognizing and commending the personnel of Tucson's Davis-Monthan Air Force Base.

Original Sponsor: Sen. Al Melvin, R-Dist. 11

House Bills

HB 2103- concealed carry permit; qualifications

Authorizes DPS to issue concealed weapons permits to U.S. Citizens or residents of this state, 21 years old or older, OR at least 19 years old who provides evidence of current military service or proof of honorable discharge or general discharge under honorable conditions from the United States Armed Forces, Reserve, or a State National Guard.

Original Sponsor: Rep. Kelly Townsend, R-Dist. 16, et al.

HB 2135- military affairs commission; continuation

Continues the Arizona Military Affairs Commission to 1 July 2022.

Original Sponsor: Rep. Darin Mitchell, R-Dist. 13, et al.

HB 2150- empowerment scholarships; military families

Exempts children whose parent(s) or guardian(s) are Active Duty members of the United States Armed Forces from certain eligibility requirements of the empowerment scholarship account (ESA) program. Includes children whose military parent or guardian was killed in the line of duty in the definition of an ESA *qualified student*.

Original Sponsor: Rep. Sonny Borrelli, R-Dist. 5, et al.

HB 2204- military applicants; commercial driver licenses

Waives the driving test requirement for class A, B or C licenses for qualified applicants who can prove they were in a military position requiring operation of a commercial motor vehicle within the past 90 days prior to application. Requires applicant to show they were operating a vehicle representative of the commercial motor vehicle the driver applicant now operates or expects to operate, for at least the 2 years immediately preceding discharge from the military.

Original Sponsor: Rep. Sonny Borrelli, R-Dist. 5; Rep. Karen Fann, R-Dist. 1

HB 2303- permits or tags; transfer; veterans

Permits the Department of Game and Fish to transfer a big game permit or tag from a person who wishes to a veteran of the Armed Forces of the United States who has a service connected disability.

Original Sponsor: Rep. Frank Pratt, R-Dist. 8; et al.

HB 2311- military justice; courts martial

Revises provisions of the Arizona Code of Military Justice.

Original Sponsor: Rep. Justin Pierce, R-Dist. 25; Sen. David Bradley, D-Dist. 10

HB 2332- unclaimed remains; veterans; burial

Authorizes the holder of the unclaimed cremated remains of a verified veteran to turn them over for burial in a veteran cemetery to a congressionally chartered veteran service organization, a veteran organization recognized by the VA, or a 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(19) charitable organization that is organized for the verification and burial of veterans.

Original Sponsor: Rep. Ethan Orr, R-Dist. 9; et al.

HB 2443- hunting and fishing licenses; military

Allows military members on permanent assignment or TDY in Arizona to immediately apply for hunting or fishing license. Currently, there is a 30 day waiting period for servicemembers permanently assigned here.

Original Sponsor: Rep. David Gowan, R-Dist. 14; et al.

HB 2457- mental health; veterans' courts; establishment

Authorizes the presiding judge of each county superior court to establish a *regional* veterans court. This would allow Justice of the Peace Courts as well as municipal courts in the county to transfer veterans' cases to the regional veterans court.

Original Sponsor: Rep. Eddie Farnsworth, R-Dist. 12

HB 2514- combat related special compensation **Retroactive effective date of 29 July 2010**

Prohibits courts from considering service-connected disability benefits for combat-related disabled veterans in divorce proceedings when deciding distribution of property or spousal maintenance. Current statute prohibits same for Title 38 disability.

Original Sponsor: Rep. Kelly Townsend, D-Dist. 16; Rep. Sonny Borrelli, R-Dist. 5; et al.

HB 2537- pawnbrokers; interest; military members

Increases the interest pawnbrokers may charge from 8 to 13 % per month the first two months, but not more than 11% per month thereafter from the current 6%. Would also require pawnbrokers who receive copies of deployment orders for members of the Arizona National Guard, Active Duty or Reserve military to waive any unpaid interest charges and hold the pledged goods until 60 days after the military member returns from active duty service.

Original Sponsor: Rep. T. J. Shope, D-Dist. 8; Rep. Sonny Borrelli, R-Dist. 5; et al.

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HCM 2001-POWs; MIAs; congressional committee

A Concurrent Resolution urging the United States Congress to establish a select committee on POW and MIA affairs.

Original Sponsor:

Rep. Sonny Borrelli, R-Dist. 5; Rep. Paul Boyer, R-Dist. 20; Rep. Doris Goodale, R-Dist. 5; Sen. David Farnsworth, R-Dist.16.

HM 2001- agent orange exposure; Vietnam veterans

A House Memorial urging the U. S. Congress to restore the presumption of service connection between exposure to Agent Orange and subsequent illnesses contracted by Vietnam veterans.

Original Sponsor: Rep. Sonny Borrelli, R-Dist. 5; et al.

HM 2002- burn pits; health risks; veterans

A House Memorial urging the U. S. Congress to recognize the significant health risks connected to open-air burn pit exposure. Deployed units will often dispose of hazardous materials by burning them in open-air pits exposing military personnel to the smoke, etc. generated by the burning.

Original Sponsor: Rep. Mark Cardenas, D-Dist.19; Rep. Sonny Borrelli, R-Dist. 5; et al.

Unless stated after the title, the general effective date of the above bills is 24 July 2014.

PIMA COMMUNITY COLLEGE – UPDATE

ADVS Director Ted Vogt met with Pima Community College Chancellor Lee Lambert on April 28 to discuss the school's progress in correcting widespread

record-keeping problems discovered by the federal VA during an annual inspection.

The federal VA asked the Arizona Department of Veterans' Services (ADVS), the State agency that approves Arizona schools to receive GI Bill benefits, to intervene after PCC failed to follow federal rules for aid payments to veterans/students.

Chancellor Lambert told Director Vogt that staff at Pima Community College are working around the clock to process the necessary paperwork for the school to meet a deadline imposed by ADVS to correct the problems.

The college is not allowed to enroll new students with veterans' benefits until this is cleared up.

Lambert says he feels good about meeting the deadline in time for fall registration.

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ARIZONA STATE VETERAN HOME-PHOENIX (ASVH-Phoenix)

Thanks to Kristin Fray

We celebrated Easter and Passover this year with a special Passover Dinner for Jewish Veterans on April 17, sponsored by the Jewish War Vets Scottsdale Post #210. Veterans had an Easter Egg hunt with volunteers from Metrotech High School on April 19 and colored Easter Eggs on April 20.

Veterans and members enjoyed a meaningful Flag Retirement Ceremony on April 13. The East Valley Young Marines retired our American Flag with honor, reading a statement for each stripe while burning the flag, the proper method for retiring an American flag.

April marked the end of our outing season, as the weather will soon grow too warm for bus trips. Veterans attended their last Phoenix Boys Choir Concert on April 25, accompanied by members of the Patriot Guard and Express Scripts. They also enjoyed a baseball game outing to see the Arizona Diamondbacks with the Sun City Elks. Thank you to all who sponsored regular outings, including the Phoenix West Elks, the American Legion Auxiliary from Apache Junction, and Cooties Pup Tent #11.

We would like to give a special thanks to our volunteers who generously donated 8,313 hours of their time this past year! Our top volunteer, Tom Gardner, donated 1,276 hours in the gift shop. Other volunteers with over 500 hours included

“Weezie” Burrell and Cruz Marquez. We honored them at an appreciation dinner on April 29. Thanks to our wonderful team of volunteers!

Please ‘like’ us on Facebook to keep updated on current events! e brought in a snowmaker that put three tons of the white stuff out in front of the home for all to enjoy. "It's great, the people doing such a nice thing," said veteran Bottorff. "I've only seen snow falling from the sky three times in my life and I'll probably never get to see it again." Thanks to all of the great volunteers who help make the day special for our veteran/residents. <https://www.facebook.com/asvhphx>

ARIZONA STATE VETERAN HOME-TUCSON (ASVH-Tucson)

Thanks to Ellen Bittman & Kat Kime

Elks Lodges will be hosting a BBQ on Saturday May 3 at 11:00 in the Chapel/Community Room. This is the 2nd of their monthly BBQs. The residents really enjoyed the first one. The Bluegrass Pac will be playing bluegrass music from 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. with the BBQ following.

Cinco de Mayo – We will be having a mariachi band for our Cinco de Mayo Party on May 5 at 1:30 p.m. in the Chapel/Community Room thanks to a volunteer who made the arrangements.

Retro7 will be providing music on Saturday, May 10th at 2:00 p.m. in the Chapel/Community Room. This is their 2nd year playing for the residents. We are looking forward to their return. The American Legion Auxiliaries will be hosting this event.

The next (and last for the spring) Market-on-the-Move, hosted by the American Legion Auxiliaries, is scheduled for Saturday, May 24th from 7:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. in the southern parking lot alongside Buildings 4 and 5. For a \$10 donation, a family can receive up to 60 pounds of produce. Please note the new (earlier) time frame. Vendors and individuals are welcome to set up a table for the swap meet.

Market-on-the-Move has been a fundraiser with proceeds going to the Arizona State Veteran Home – Tucson. We would like to thank the American Legion and American Legion Auxiliaries for their dedication to our residents by providing many parties and entertainment throughout the year.

Market-on-the-Move will resume in the fall on September 27, 2014. The event is held on the 4th Saturday of each month from September through May in the south parking lot alongside Buildings 4 and 5.

Our final big event for May is our Memorial Day Program on Sunday, May 25th at 10:00 a.m. The Recreation Department would like to thank the members of the Steering Committee for their assistance in putting this program together. The Steering Committee is comprised of different Veteran organizations and community groups who meet monthly to find out how their group can help with our Veterans either by hosting parties or providing equipment.

Cecilia "Cici" Gonzales, C.N.A., was awarded Employee of the Month for May 2014. Also nominated was Denice Castel de Oro, CNA.

Thanks to all for the much needed and much appreciated donations!!!!

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SOUTHERN ARIZONA VETERANS' MEMORIAL CEMETERY-SIERRA VISTA

(SAVMC)

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The Veterans Chapel construction is progressing very nicely (see photo above). 100% of the cost of this project is fund by donations to the Southern Arizona Veterans Memorial Cemetery Foundation (SAVMCF) and they still need donations for the seating, landscape and additional upgrades. Donations can be made online at www.savmcf.org

On April 26, the Confederate Secret Service Camp 1710 of the Sons of Confederate Veterans held the Confederate Memorial Day ceremony at the Historic Soldiers Memorial Section inside the SAVMC.

Looking Forward

May 3 Valor Hospice will hold a butterfly release observance at SAVMC.

May 26 SAVMC will observe Memorial Day and dedicate the Veterans Chapel.

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HOMELESS VETERANS DIVISION

Grants:

The U.S. Department of Labor has announced a grant competition that will award 24 or more Homeless Veteran Reintegration Program grants totaling approximately \$6 million to provide an estimated 2,000 veterans with occupational, classroom, and on-the-job training, as well as job search and placement assistance, to help them succeed in the civilian labor market.

Funds are being awarded on a competitive basis to: state and local workforce investment boards; local public agencies; tribal governments and nonprofit organizations, including faith-based and community organizations. Successful applicants will design a program that addresses the multitude of challenges associated with homeless veterans.

HVRP grantees must promote active engagement with industry, employers and employer associations to identify the skills needed for in-demand jobs and careers. The grantees will coordinate their efforts with various local, state and federal social service providers.

The solicitation for grant applications (SGA 14-02) will be available at <http://www.grants.gov>.

More information on the Department of Labor's unemployment and re-employment programs for veterans can be found at <http://www.dol.gov/vets/>.

For questions about this grant announcement please contact the department's Cassandra Mitchell at 202-693-4589.

Arizona Standdown:

- There are two upcoming StandDown's being held across the State of Arizona.
- Coconino County will hold their 2nd Annual High Country Veterans StandDown on May 16-17th. On the 16th the StandDown will take place at the Flagstaff Armory 320 N. Thorpe Road from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. On the 17th the event will move to the American Legion Post 3 located at 204 Birch Ave. from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. There will be VA Services, Mental Health Services, Clothing, Meals, veterans benefits services and myriad other services and resources. The event is still looking for service providers and volunteers please go to www.arizonastanddown.org and register for the High County StandDown.
- Graham and Greenlee Serving Veterans will hold their 1st Annual StandDown on May 16th at the Arizona National Guard Armory 3625 South US Highway 191 Safford, Arizona. For more information contact Lisa Lane 928-432-6932

UPCOMING EVENTS

Tucson Mayor Rothschild's next planning meeting concerning Veterans' Day Weekend celebration 2014 in Tucson will be on Monday, May 12, 10 a.m. in the main floor conference room Tucson City Hall (255 W. Alameda St). Point of Contact is Cathy Borinstein Office: 520-791-4201, Direct: 520-837-4034.

**James E. ("Eddie") Weathers
Commander, Chapter 572
Military Order of the Purple Heart
Col Carroll M Fyffe Memorial Chapter**