

Arizona America250 Commission

Military and Veterans Affairs Subcommittee

Virtually via Zoom

Meeting Minutes of August 12, 2025

1. Call to order, roll call, and welcome.

The meeting was called to order at 9:02am.

Subcommittee Members Present:

Honorable Adrian Fontes, Chair	Manny Beltran, Vice Chair	
Will Davis	Julia Gusse	Paul Aguirre
Sean Stoddard	Gary Vaughan	Wanda Wright
David Lucier	Terry Ballentine	Bob Dalpe
Les Presmyk	Keith Gray	Paula Pedene

2. Discussion and possible action on meeting minutes from April 8, 2025.

MOTION: Approval of the April 8, 2025, minutes as distributed. Les Presmyk moved, Gary Vaughan seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

3. Report from Executive Director

a. Next steps for A250 AZ tentpole initiatives. The Commission is very close to securing the vehicle for the Traveling Museum and securing a PR firm. An interest form will soon launch for locales that wish to host the museum. The Passport250 initiative with the Arizona Office of Tourism launched in July with an initial 25 sites and 75 rolled out for the next three months. The site nomination form was shared with a particular focus on adding commemorative locations honoring military members and Veterans.

4. Discussion, updates, and possible action on projects and initiatives to engage military members, military families, and Veterans in the Semiquincentennial.

a. Veterans Day parade float and activities. Paula Pedene reported she reached out to the East Valley and Prescott parade organizers. She will work on trucks. She will also need volunteers to march or ride in the parade and would like to know about getting banners for parades. ED Terech reported that we are putting together a plan to buy swag, including banners. Chair Fontes would like the new A250 AZ PR firm to meet with Paula regarding these events once they come on board.

b. Operation Freedom March: Arizona Trail relay. Chappy reported that lots of exciting things are happening. He would like everyone to sign up to get engaged on the trail. National Public Lands Day on 27 September will see the first official OFM event. He is promoting the day within his own circles and anticipates working with the new PR firm once it's hired. Chappy shared designs for trail-related swag. A250 AZ and the Arizona Trail Association are working together to purchase swag for participants, including bandanas, stickers, challenge coins, and possibly hats.

c. USS Arizona SSN-803 collaboration. There was no one from the SSN-803 group available to provide an update. Gary Vaughan reported that the Scouts have been collecting grommets for this project. David Lucier suggested coordinating with the Maricopa-Pima Indian community for their USS Arizona displays. Gary reports that the USS Arizona Memorial Foundation in HI is also going to participate in the grommet collection challenge.

d. Arizona State Legislature Veterans Caucus. David Lucier reports that the caucus took a summer hiatus and will meet again in September. He suggested sponsoring a lunch at their meeting. This would allow the Chair or a representative to speak to the caucus.

e. Eagle Scout projects to support Veterans and military families. Gary Vaughan reported he spent a lot of time this summer with Scouts who want to help veterans and shared examples of a project centered on making flag-carrying cases as well as neighborhood cleanups. He solicited ideas from the group for those working toward their Eagle Scout badge.

f. Communications and social media. Awaiting hiring a PR firm.

g. Updates from subcommittee members on additional events to promote and co-brand. Gary Vaughan wants to invite everyone to State Farm Stadium on 14 September for American Legion/First Responder Day. David Lucier reported that a group is considering reconstituting Vietnam Veterans Memorial celebration at the memorial in Wesley Bolin Plaza, working with both American and Vietnamese veterans. The event will be in March of 2026. Bob Dalpe gave information about a fun run on 20 September at ASU.

5. Call to the public.

No public comments were received.

Next meeting will be on September 9, 2025, at 9am.

6. Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 9:35am.

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