

## **Arizona America250 Commission**

### *Military and Veterans Affairs Subcommittee*

Virtually via Zoom

### **Meeting Minutes of December 9, 2025**

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

The meeting was called to order at 9:00am.

#### **Subcommittee Members Present:**

Manny Beltran, Erin Hannigan, David Lucier, Les Presmyk, Julia Gusse, Gary Vaughan, Keith Gray, Wanda Wright, Paul Johnson.

#### **2. Discussion and possible action on meeting minutes from October 14, 2025.**

**MOTION:** Approval of draft minutes as written. Les Presmyk moved, Gary Vaughan seconded; the motion passed unanimously.

#### **3. Report from Executive Director**

- a. Traveling Museum.** Executive Director Terech shared design layouts and planned exhibits for the Traveling Museum, which is planned to launch on February 14, 2026. The route has not yet been set, though it is expected by late December or early January. ED Terech highlighted military content, including the legacy of the USS Arizona and the new submarine, Code Talkers, and Arizona National Guard.
- b. Passport250.** Passport250 highlights military memorials as a part of Commemorate250. The link to sign up was shared.
- c. Our American Story.** Our American Story is a national initiative to collect oral histories ahead of the 250<sup>th</sup>. ED Terech shared a link to nominate community members for interviews.

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

- a. Veterans Day and Pearl Harbor Day events wrap up.** Honoring America's Veterans reported a successful 250 event with the parade. The Secretary of State had an entry that

included George Washington and Abraham Lincoln carrying a banner. Estimate estimated 45,000 attendees. The Pearl Harbor Day Commemoration at Wesley Bolin Plaza had 300 attendees and the Sea Cadets volunteer efforts earned them a 250. Planners are working on involving more ROTC and JROTC units for next year's event.

- b. Promoting Operation Freedom March.** Need for additional promotion ahead of prime hiking season. AZ Trails and A250 AZ will connect with PR & Marketing in the new year.
- c. USS Arizona SSN-803.** Luncheon with the Chairman of the foundation along with the former Secretary of the Navy. Elected officials attended, Les Presmyk attended. Crew has been commissioned. USS Arizona challenge coins are now available. American Legion has completed the grommet collection from flags that have flown over Arizona. They have cast one of the bells for the new USS Arizona and more bells will be cast with the Sons of the American Legion.
- d. Eagle Scout projects to support Veterans and military families.** American Legion supports approximately 50 different Scouting units with several projects, including constructing flag cases for those in need and city cleanups.
- e. Updates from subcommittee members on additional events and initiatives to promote and co-brand.** American Legion Oratorical Contest for 2026, which is a national competition for high school students. One Arizona student was sent to Nationals and made the semi-finals. 15 people have already signed up. This year they plan to promote widely for a large audience to attend the speeches. The event will take place on March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2026, at Sandra Day O'Connor high school. Scholarships available at each level. Keith Gray shared a tribute to the Grand Canyon high school – the only high school in a national park, called Growing Up Grand. This will be shared with further detail at the January meeting. Wreaths Across America will present wreaths in honor of the fallen as well as those who serve on December 13<sup>th</sup>. Additional A250 events for 2026 listed below.
  - Veterans Forum March 27
  - Honor Wall Memorial Day
  - Veterans Business Summit in June date TBD
  - Honor Our Heroes Grand Marshals Campaign, July
  - HAV High School Essay Competition, August
  - 9/11 Tattered Flag event with Scottsdale Fire
  - 11/11 HAV Veterans Day Parade
  - HAV Pearl Harbor Day Commemoration, Dec 5

**5. Call to the public.** No public comments received.

6. **Adjournment.** The meeting adjourned at 9:38am.

The next meeting will take place on January 13, 2026, at 9am.

DRAFT