



Arizona America250 Commission
Military and Veterans Affairs Subcommittee
Virtually via Zoom
Meeting Minutes of July 8, 2025

I. Call to order and welcome.

Vice Chair Beltran called the meeting to order at 09:04 am

Subcommittee Members Present:

Adrian Fontes, Chair
Nicole LaSlavic
Paul Johnson

Manny Beltran, Vice Chair
Bob Dalpe
Les Presmyk

Julia Gusse
Paula Pedene
Wanda Wright

Subcommittee Members Absent:

Terry Ballentine
David Lucier
Sean Stoddard

Paul Aguirre
Erin Hannigan
Gary Vaughan

Keith Gray
Jonell Sullivan

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

MOTION: Minutes of April 8, 2025, adopted with no changes. Adrian Fontes motioned; Bob Dalpe seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

III. Report from the Executive Director.

Tonia Tunnell reported on behalf of the Executive Director. The selection of a public relations firm is expected by the next meeting. The Commission is finalizing the hiring of a fundraising staff member to support fundraising efforts. The first 25 Passport250 locations have been set, with a press release to be released very soon in partnership with Arizona Tourism. Public nominations for Arizona landmarks and attractions are being accepted at www.azsos.gov/passport250. The Commission is seeking a large vehicle (such as a tractor-trailer) for a traveling museum and requests leads from members. Email any leads America250AZ@azsos.gov.



IV. **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 that a truck and trailer (or a vehicle) are needed for the Phoenix parade float, and costumes are available (Abe Lincoln, George and Martha Washington). Volunteers are needed for all veteran parades this year; applications will start to open August 1.

MOTION: Call for volunteers to participate in Veterans Day parades. Paula Pedene motioned; Paul Johnson seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

b. **Operation Freedom March: Arizona Trail relay.**

Chappy announced the event is live and open for sign-ups, with swag in development. Members are encouraged to participate and promote. [Register Online](#). [Link to SOS Press Release](#). Coordination for a photo opportunity on the trail with the Secretary of State.

c. **USS Arizona SSN-803 collaboration.**

Members are traveling to the East Coast for a change of command ceremony and have completed an educational workshop on USS Arizona history. There is potential for the crew to visit Arizona in the fall. Commander Beltran is working with Boy Scouts to collect flag grommets. If you have grommets, please let Commander Beltran know.

d. **Arizona State Legislature Veterans Caucus.**

Bob Dalpe reported limited current activity but plans to reach out to city military groups.

e. **Eagle Scout projects to support Veterans and military families.**

No report (Gary Vaughan absent).

f. **Communications and social media.**

No updates.

g. **Updates from subcommittee members on additional events to promote and co-brand.**

No updates.



V. **Discussion and possible action on a potential initiative: Arizona America250 Veterans Town Hall project, presented by Deputy Assistant Secretary of State and Deputy Chief of Staff Murphy Hebert.**

Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Murphy Hebert presented a proposal for a statewide veteran's town hall initiative. The Secretary of State's office plans to host town halls in various Arizona communities during 2025, aligning with the Secretary's already scheduled travel days. Three pilot events are planned for this year. The subcommittee is asked to help identify potential partners and locations, especially through local veterans' organizations and posts. Discussion included the possibility of resource fairs and collaboration with local groups. Members expressed interest in co-hosting and supporting the events. Murphy invited committee members and veterans' community representatives to email America250AZ@azsos.gov if they would like to participate in the town halls or share resources to support the initiative.

VI. **Public Comment.**

Paul Johnson noted new programs will be launched this fall. Julia Gusse requested information on parade dates; Paula Pedene will follow up with details including a call for volunteers.

VII. **Adjournment.**

The meeting was adjourned at 09:45 am.