



UNIFIED ARIZONA VETERANS

THE VOICE OF ARIZONA'S VETERANS

PO Box 34338
Phoenix, AZ 85067
secretary@azuav.org
www.azuav.org
602-899-5828
EIN: 90-0914161

MEMBERSHIP MEETING MINUTES February 7, 2026 – 0900-1100

Attendees

- Via Zoom (25): Chair Hohman, IPC Burns, Secretary Forkner, Director Yates, Director McDermott, Director Milem, Chaplain Seago, Caroleen Culbertson (HOF), Director Stewart (DAV), Susan Yu (NAVAHCS), Michael Welsh (PVAHCS), Maria Nguyen (SAVAHCS), Sonia Vasquez (ACMF), Gary Ochoa (ADVS), Bill Talcott, Chandra Toy (AUSA), Nancy Fassbender, Jeanne Blaes, Kathy Upchurch (GSSA-PHX), Arlethe (Sen. Kelly), Chris Gahan (Perch Base), Ravyn Crescent, Mary Williams. Not fully identified: Phillip's iPad.
- Excused: Treasurer Bernard

The meeting opened with standard housekeeping, followed by an invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Previous Minutes and Treasurer's Report

Minutes from the January 3, 2026 meeting were approved without changes.

The Treasurer reported a beginning balance of **\$101,218.67**, with **\$15,565.99** in receipts and no expenditures, ending at **\$116,804.66**. The account is fully reconciled. Members were reminded of the updated dues structure.

Chaplain's Report

The Chaplain provided updates on ill or recovering members and invited notifications of others needing outreach.

Congressional Updates

A representative from Senator Kelly's office highlighted increased FY26 funding for VA healthcare, toxic exposure initiatives, rural health, caregiver programs, women's health, mental health, homelessness prevention, and suicide-prevention efforts. Arizona secured funding for a child development center at Luke AFB and continued improvements in cancer reporting and alternative pain-management research. Appropriation webinars will begin soon.

VA Medical Center Reports

- **Phoenix VA:** Received an AMA burnout-reduction award, held a virtual Town Hall, and is preparing for National Salute to Veteran Patients Week. Progress continues on the Fisher House project, VSO mixers, and women veterans outreach.
- **Southern Arizona VA (Tucson):** Broke ground on a **30,000 sq. ft. Yuma clinic** expanding primary care, women's health, and specialty services. Opened a new chapel, scheduled a mental health open house, and warned veterans about scam texts.
- **Northern Arizona VA:** Introduced a new VISN CFO; reported strong audit performance and OIG inspection results; highlighted community outreach, supportive housing progress, and upcoming women's Town Hall events.

National Cemetery Administration

Plans for Memorial Day ceremonies are underway. Grounds maintenance has resumed following earlier delays. The cemetery will conduct its first **green burial** as part of a national pilot program.

Arizona Department of Veterans' Services

Updates included:

- Homes for Heroes grants awarded to reduce veteran homelessness.
- Governor's proposed budget boosting state veterans home and cemetery funding.
- Efforts to replace the Tucson home's HVAC system.
- Expansion planning for Sierra Vista and Marana cemeteries.
- Legislative liaison retiring to run for office.

Arizona Coalition for Military Families / Be Connected

Be Connected continues statewide outreach supporting veterans across all life domains, with emphasis on employment, employer partnerships, navigation services, and community training. Symposium registration is now open.

Legislative Affairs

Veteran service leaders met with Sen. Gowan regarding **SB 1803**, advocating for VA accreditation requirements to curb predatory claims practices. Issues persist surrounding the 100% disabled veteran property tax exemption, with legislative fixes forthcoming. UAV is assisting veterans statewide in activating Request to Speak accounts.

Membership Updates

The body approved automatic membership for subordinate chapters of existing member organizations. New members include **DAV Chapters 27, 8, and 39**, and the **Gold Star Spouses of America** (conditional approval pending final documentation).

Good of the Order

Announcements included community events, stand downs, training opportunities, mission changes at Soldiers Best Friend, AVHOF's Patriotic Awards Luncheon on May 1st, and reminders to submit nominations for the **2026 Arizona Veterans Hall of Fame by March 31**.

Closing

The chaplain delivered the benediction. UAV plans to transition future meetings to Google Meet and will offer training to support members through the change.

A reminder to Zoom participants: Please ensure that you *mute your microphone* and *turn off your video* during presentations — this saves bandwidth and makes the meeting run more smoothly.

Thanks!

Respectfully submitted,



Secretary
Unified Arizona Veterans
AVHOF Class of 2025
(O) 602.899.5828
(C) 623.226.7543
www.azuav.org

