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TO: Department Officers
Chapter Commanders and Adjutants

FROM: Dr. Carl Forkner, Department Adjutant

SUBJ: DAV DISASTER RELIEF PROGRAM IN ACTION IN ARIZONA

DATE: October 27, 2026

Department Officers, Chapter Commanders and Adjutants,

As you may recall, in August the Department of Arizona presented a donation of \$10,000 at the National Convention in Orlando, Florida, for the National organization's Disaster Relief Program. Recent events demonstrate why philanthropy of this kind is essential to supporting the Veteran Community across America.

This past weekend, torrential rains caused flooding across much of the Navajo Nation. So far, the estimate is that over 100 Veteran families have been displaced from their homes and are currently being sheltered in churches, community centers, and other available locations. Of course, we know that during this time, they will lack regular access to things like their clothing, bedding, and other daily essentials that we all tend to take for granted.

What does that mean for us at DAV? Yesterday, I emailed John Kleindienst and Scott Hope at National Headquarters and the Washington, DC Headquarters, to inquire about getting assistance for those Veteran families through the DAV Disaster Relief Program—the very program that we supported this summer. Today, Aunjel Smith, our NSO Office Supervisor, was contacted by Scott Hope to activate the program here, after which she contacted me for additional details and points of contact on the Reservation. She has since contacted our primary contact, Sara Josley, President of the All-Navajo Veterans Auxiliary, and is currently making plans to head up to the Reservation to begin the assessment and relief efforts for those Veterans affected by the flooding.

Two items to take away from this: (1) the program works; when we need it, it is there. (2) please be patient as you contact and/or request things from the National Service Office during this time—the National Service Offices in each state are the leaders who go out to the disaster site and implement the Disaster Relief Program protocols and relief efforts.

There are, of course, many needs that have compounded since the widespread flooding. Fortunately, we have previously taken donations to the Reservation that will help...but it is not enough. I was at ground zero for Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and I have seen how just a day or two of torrential rain and winds can require years for recovery. The average non-government worker on the Reservation brings home between \$12K-\$24K *per year* for income. For reference, on the following page is the list of the 2026 federal poverty levels by household residents:

We are dedicated to a single purpose: empowering veterans to lead high-quality lives with respect and dignity. We accomplish this by ensuring that veterans and their families can access the full range of benefits available to them; fighting for the interests of America's injured heroes on Capitol Hill; and educating the public about the great sacrifices and needs of veterans transitioning back to civilian life.

The following guideline figures represent annual income.

2026 Poverty Guidelines for the 48 Contiguous
States and the District of Columbia

Persons in family/household	Poverty guideline
1	\$15,960
2	21,640
3	27,320
4	33,000
5	38,680
6	44,360
7	50,040
8	55,720

For families/households with more than 8 persons, add \$5,680 for each additional person.

Overall, the Native American Community serves in the United States Armed Forces at a rate five times that of any other demographic. They are proud of their service and of the long history of service by Native Americans. This is the home of the famous Navajo Code Talkers, of which there are only two still living from the second 200, while all the initial 29 have passed on. But, to the Navajo people, as with all our Native Americans, tradition is of paramount importance in all that they do.

On the Department website is a list of items that are desperately needed on the Reservation. There is a convenient link on the home page (and PLEASE feel free to share that with all your members, their families, friends, and other organizations that may be able to help).

These are our fellow Veterans—*ONE TEAM, ONE FIGHT!*

Special thanks to Aunjel Smith, our NSO Office Supervisor, who is leading the effort in Arizona!

Sincerely,



Carl B. Forkner

cc: National Service Director Hope
National Service Office (Andrew Clark)
Phoenix National Service Office Supervisor Aunjel Smith
Phoenix NSO Office
ANVA (President Josley & Vice President Barrington)