I had the privilege to represent the Hopi Tribe last month during my visit to the US Mint. First, my sincere thanks to the Hopi Tribal Council for approving funds for my travel to Washington DC to represent the Hopi Tribe, as I presented our recommended Hopi Code Talker Medal concept to the 14 member Citizens Coin Advisory Committee (CCAC) at the US Mint on July 24, 2013. The CCAC members consisted of people with extensive fields in sculptures, rare coin collectors and from other professional fields.

After brief introductions, the CCAC allowed me 15 minutes to provide my presentation on the Tribe’s history, the Code Talkers legacy and finally our recommended Code Talker medal concept. After my presentation, a few questions were asked by the board members to clarify our concept design, which I answered. Before the CCAC voted on their recommended medal design the Board Chairman commented the Hopi Medal design showed great action on the front side and it was the best medal design he had seen thus far on all the Code Talker medals. The CCAC voted and recommended our Hopi medal concept for both the front design at 29 points and reserve design at 28 points, using a maximum score of 30. The next step is to finalize the design based on our recommended revisions and these will be provided to us for review in a few weeks. Once we formally accept the final design, then it will move forward for the Secretary of Treasury’s final review and ultimate approval to start the production of the medal in time for the presentation date.

After the CCAC meeting, Mr. William G. Norton, Jr., Director, Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs, provided the Tribe representatives an update on the presentation date. The date will be November 20, 2013, at the US Capitol, and he will send formal notification to the Tribes once ceremony details are finalized. I mentioned to him the Hopi contingent attending may be 30 to 40 people, consisting of Code Talker family members and Hopi officials.

Following the CCAC meeting, after a 10-minute walk to locate the VA building, I had a brief lunch break before I met with Mr. Jason Cain, Director, Intergovernmental Affairs, Department of Veterans Affairs, who provided me an overview on their mission. We also discussed various issues regarding Hopi veterans to improve rural VA health care, claims processes for VA benefits for veterans and spouses and transportation fund sources. Following our discussion, Mr. Cain provided me a tour of the facility. After the meeting, I then proceeded on a nice leisurely walk to the US Capitol, about 2 miles, so I was able to record this in my Hopi Wellness 100 Mile Club log.

Locating the Cannon Building, I met with Ms. Melissa Munoz, Legislative Assistant, Congresswoman Ann Kirkpatrick, First District, AZ, and I briefed her on the Hopi Code Talker Medal progression and the ceremony date. I also expressed the Hopi Code Talker family’s wishes on support from Congresswoman Kirkpatrick when the Hopi delegation comes to Washington for the presentation ceremony. Ms. Munoz stated she would brief the Congresswoman on my visit and my requests on assistance for the Hopi delegation’s visit to Washington for the Code Talker Medal ceremony. With this final meeting, this concluded my visits and I returned home on July 25.

It was my honor to represent the Hopi Tribe during my visits with the CCAC, the VA and Congresswoman’s Kirkpatrick’s office. Finally, my sincere appreciation to each of the Hopi Tribal Advisory Committee members who have assisted me during our medal design concept process. The medal we recommended tells a simple story, with action of our Hopi Code Talkers legacy and reverence of our Hopi Tribe, which will be cherish for generations by the surviving family members, the Hopi Tribe and our Nation.
WASHINGTON – Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki announced today the award of nearly $300 million in grants that will help approximately 120,000 homeless and at-risk Veterans and their families. The grants have been awarded to 319 community agencies in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands.

“With these grants, we are strengthening our partnership with community non-profits across the country to provide Veterans and their families with hope, a home, and a future,” said Shinseki. “The work of Supportive Services for Veteran Families program grantees has already helped us prevent and end homelessness among tens of thousands of homeless Veterans and their families, but as long as a single Veteran lives on our streets, we have work to do.”

Under the Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program, VA is awarding grants to private non-profit organizations and consumer cooperatives that provide services to very low-income Veteran families living in -- or transitioning to -- permanent housing. The SSVF program supports VA’s efforts to prevent at-risk Veterans from becoming homeless and rapidly re-house those who have recently fallen into homelessness.

Thanks to the SSVF grants, those community organizations will provide a range of services that promote housing stability and play a key role in connecting Veterans and their family members to VA services such as mental health care and other benefits. Community-based groups can offer temporary financial assistance on behalf of Veterans for rent payments, utility payments, security deposits and moving costs.

This is the third year SSVF grants have helped Veterans and their families find or remain in their homes. Last year, VA provided about $100 million to assist approximately 50,000 Veterans and family members.

In 2009, President Obama and Secretary Shinseki announced the federal government’s goal to end Veterans’ homelessness in 2015. The grants are intended to help accomplish that goal. According to the 2012 Point-in-Time Estimates of Homelessness, homelessness among Veterans has declined 17.2 percent since 2009.

Through the homeless Veterans initiative, VA committed over $1 billion in fiscal year 2013 to strengthen programs that prevent and end homelessness among Veterans. VA provides a range of services to homeless Veterans, including health care, job training, and education.

More information about VA’s homeless programs is available at www.va.gov/homeless. Details about the Supportive Services for Veteran Families program are online at www.va.gov/homeless/ssvf.asp.

Veterans Benefits Service Officer to Assist Veterans and Widows on Hopi

Tanya Dooline, Veterans Service Officer, AZ DVS, will conduct VA benefits assistance for Veterans and Widows who reside on or around the Hopi Reservation. Her next visit to Hopi will be on Thursday, August 8, 2013, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. (MST), at the Hopi Guidance Center. She will assist Veterans with VA compensation and pension applications and medical enrollments. To better assist you in submitting VA claims, please bring copies of: DD Form 214 (military discharge); marriage certificate; social security card for self, spouse, and children; birth certificate of self, spouse and children; divorce decrees; death certificates (deceased Veterans); award letters from federal, state or tribal entities; and any other documentation as supporting evidence for VA claims. Call Geno, Tara or Hanna at (928) 737-1834/1836 to make an appointment.

Below are the telephone numbers to schedule, cancel or change your VA medical appointments:

Flagstaff VA CBOC: (928) 226-1056
Prescott VAMC: (800) 949-1005

Holbrook VA TBOC: (928) 524-1050
Phoenix VAMC: (800) 554-7174

Chinle VA CBOC: (928) 674-7675

Call Hopi Veterans Services at (928) 737-1834/1836 for assistance or information to enroll in the VA Health Care System or other VA benefits.

Call us and we will be happy to assist you to learn more about VA benefits you may qualify for.

The Hopi Veterans Services Office will be closed on Friday, August 9, 2013 in observance of Pueblo Revolt Day. Enjoy your holiday! We will return at regular business hours on Monday, August 12, 2013.
WASHINGTON – Veterans will have improved access to health care under a Department of Veterans Affairs initiative that supports new transportation services for those living in highly rural areas.

VA began accepting applications this month for grants to help state Veterans Service Agencies and Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) operate or contract for transportation services to transport Veterans to VA medical centers and other facilities that provide VA care. A new regulation establishes the program that will administer these grants. Transportation will be provided at no cost to Veterans.

“VA wants to be sure that all Veterans, including those who live in rural and remote areas, can receive the health care they have earned through service to our country,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. “State Veterans Agencies and VSOs will now be able to employ innovative approaches to transportation services for Veterans in our highly rural areas. The end results will include better service and better health care for Veterans.”

VSOs and State Veterans Service Agencies may apply for grants up to $50,000 to fund transportation of Veterans to and from VA medical centers and other facilities that provide VA care. If specified in the application, the services may be provided under agreements with contractors, such as private bus or van companies.

A highly rural area is defined as a county or counties with a population of fewer than seven persons per square mile. Many highly rural areas are found in the western and southwestern United States but at least half of the states have at least one highly rural area.

One of Secretary Shinseki’s top three priorities is increasing access to VA care and services for Veterans wherever they live. VA is expanding access in a three-pronged effort that includes facilities, programs and technology. Veterans who served in Iraq or Afghanistan are eligible for an extended period of eligibility for health care for 5 years after they have left the service.

For more information, please see the Federal Register.

Mr. President, distinguished guests, especially our guests from Korea; fellow Veterans; ladies and gentlemen:

Six decades ago, the guns fell silent all along the 38th parallel in Korea, ending more than three and a half years of bloodshed, destruction, and enormous suffering. Today’s ceremony honors the extraordinary courage of those, from all our nations, who fought, bled, died, went missing, suffered brutal captivity, and triumphed there.

More than 1.7 million Americans fought in Korea—on pieces of terrain nicknamed Pork Chop Hill and Heartbreak Ridge; in towns and places like Chipyong-ni, Pusan, and Chosin Reservoir; and in unnamed locations known only by grid coordinates and hilltop elevations.

T.R. Fehrenbach’s definitive work, This Kind of War, chronicles timeless lessons about military readiness that were re-learned in Korea and it provides this oft-cited quotation:

“... You may fly over a land forever; you may bomb it, atomize it, pulverize it and wipe it clean of life–but if you desire to defend it, protect it, and keep it for civilization, you must do this on the ground, the way the Roman Legions did, by putting your young men into the mud.”

The Veterans we honor today were the young we sent to the mud of Korea with little notice. The lessons are many, as are the arguments about how they should have been better prepared and equipped to fight that expeditionary mission. What is unarguable, however, is the heroism with which these Veterans performed their missions. They rose above all questions of readiness to preserve the freedom of the South Korean people.

Today, we honor all Veterans, who served so courageously in Korea, and we thank their families for their service and sacrifice. Kapshi Kapshida! [We Go Together]

God bless our Veterans, and may God continue to bless this wonderful country of ours. Thank you
Arizona Department of Veterans’ Services Director Ted Vogt is a proud veteran of the United States Air Force, serving our country for six years on active duty as an intelligence officer. After the attacks of September 11, 2001, he deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM, and throughout the greater Middle East in support of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. Because of his outstanding performance, Director Vogt was hand-picked to serve as the daily intelligence briefer for both the Secretary of the Air Force and Chief of Staff of the Air Force. Leaving active duty in 2006, he returned home to Tucson and attended law school at the University of Arizona on the G.I. Bill.

While in law school, Director Vogt remained heavily involved in Homeland and National Security matters. During the summer of 2008, he worked on Homeland Security issues at the White House, and, in 2009, he clerked for U.S. Senator Jon Kyl on the Senate Judiciary’s Subcommittee on Terrorism and Homeland Security in Washington, D.C., as well as for the Criminal Division within the United States Attorney’s Office in Tucson. Director Vogt served in the Arizona House of Representatives from 2010 until 2013 as a state representative for Legislative District 30 (Tucson, Sierra Vista, Tubac). While in the Legislature, he tirelessly championed veterans’ issues, such as granting automatic in-state tuition to any honorable discharged veterans at all of Arizona’s public universities and community colleges. Prior to entering the Air Force, Director Vogt spent time in the private sector as an investment banker, an advertising executive, and as executive assistant to then-former Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld. He holds a B.A. from Yale University and a J.D. from the University of Arizona’s Rogers College of Law.

Dear Veterans Service Organization Representative:

Linda Stiles, Director of the Governor’s Office of Boards and Commissions, asked that I reach out to the veterans’ service organizations to obtain additional nominations to fill vacancies with the Arizona Veterans’ Service Advisory Commission. The Advisory Commission was established by Arizona Revised Statute §41-602 (see attached). Its purpose is to promote public awareness and enhance the well-being of past and present Arizona service members and their families.

Please consider nominating a candidate for appointment from your organization to serve as a member of the commission. The nominee must be a veteran appointed from a list submitted by veteran’s organizations in this state. The veteran’s organization must hold a charter granted by Congress or recognized by the Department as a veteran’s organization that is actively involved in supporting veteran programs in this state.

In the past, the agency has requested that you forward all nominations here because of unusual statutory requirements. The Governor's Office of Boards and Commissions is using an automated process and has agreed to assume all responsibility for accepting and screening nominations to ensure that the nomination packet includes the following:

- The veteran organization’s letter of recommendation for the nominee(s).
- The online application has been completed (http://azgovernor.gov/bc/).
- A copy of the nominee’s resume.
- A copy of the nominee’s separation documents.
- A letter from nominee(s) stating he/she is willing to serve.

If you have a qualified individual or individuals that you would like to nominate, the following documents must be submitted no later than Friday, September 6, 2013:

On behalf of the Arizona Department of Veterans’ Services, I thank you and your organization for the opportunity to work with you. Please call Ms. Katherine Harding at 602-234-8415 with any questions. Sincerely, Ted Vogt, Director.

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As the Director of the Arizona Department of Veterans’ Services, it’s important to me that we make sure that all of Arizona’s Veterans are served.

As the number of women wearing our nation’s uniform has increased over the years, there has been a growing need for supportive and specialized services for military and Veteran women. Today, there are thousands of women on Active Duty who enlisted from or reside in the State of Arizona. In addition, there are more than 58,000 women Veterans who now live in Arizona.

To help meet the needs of these women, the Arizona Department of Veterans’ Services, in partnership with the Veterans Affairs Medical Centers, is teaming up to hold the Arizona Military/Veteran Women’s Health & Knowledge Fair. The Health & Knowledge Fair is our new approach to serving military and Veteran women in the State of Arizona.

Designed specifically as a family-friendly event, the Fair will focus on health services, skill building, benefits, resources, and will include community service providers to direct support and services to our Arizona military and Veteran women.

Please join me and Phoenix VA Health Care System Director Sharon Helman on Saturday, August 17th at 7-8 a.m. at the Phoenix VA Medical Center as we kick off the day-long event designed to serve you.

Each VA Medical Center in Arizona will provide similar services and activities for military and Veteran women unique to their facility, and we encourage you to visit your Regional VA Medical Center on this day.

For more information and to register for the Phoenix Health & Knowledge Fair please visit www.azdvs.gov

If you are a service provider or a vendor who wants to help us serve those who have served us by being a part of the Fair, contact Sean Price at sprice@azdvs.gov or 602.234.8402. See you there, Ted Vogt.

AZ Military Family Relief Fund Helps Veterans and Military Members

The Arizona Military Family Relief Fund Advisory Committee approved three applications at their last meeting on 16 July, providing $7,717.77 in assistance for hardships caused by service in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In the month of July, three emergency applications were awarded for $7,124.23 to assist those veteran families avoid eviction and maintain their housing stability which was put at risk as a result of their combat related disabilities.

The Arizona Military Family Relief Fund has awarded 63 grants totaling $158,671.78 to assist the families of Arizona’s service members and veterans since the beginning of 2013. Since 2008, the MFRF has awarded 470 grants totaling $1,413,113.51.

For more information on the Fund visit www.azdvs.gov

Continued from page 4, AZDVS Seeks Advisory Commission Nominees

41-602. Arizona veterans' service advisory commission: terms; qualifications; compensation

A. An Arizona veterans' service advisory commission is established consisting of nine members appointed by the governor. Each member shall serve a term of three years.

B. Members shall be veterans and shall be appointed from a list of names submitted by each veterans' organization in this state holding a charter granted by Congress or recognized by the department as a veterans' organization that is actively involved in supporting veteran affairs programs in this state. Not more than two members shall be appointed from any one veterans' organization. Members shall not serve more than two consecutive three year terms.

C. At the first meeting held after July 1 of each year, the commission shall elect a chairperson and vice-chairperson.

D. The commission shall meet on the call of the chairperson but at least once during each three month period. No actions may be taken without a quorum present.

E. The commission shall provide policy advice to the governor and the director regarding veterans' issues.

F. Members are not eligible to receive compensation but are eligible for reimbursement of expenses pursuant to title 38, chapter 4, article 2.
The new director of the Arizona Department of Veterans Services is Ted Vogt from Tucson. He is a veteran of the U.S. Air Force who served as an intelligence officer and commanded a unit that was responsible for providing counter-terrorism and threat information. He served in Afghanistan and the Middle East as part of Iraqi Freedom. He has served in many other capacities and as a civilian served in the Arizona House of Representatives.

Two restaurants are now giving discounts to veterans. Which Wich will give a 10 percent discount. It has a sandwich shop in Chandler and will open another in Gilbert. Uncle Bears Grill and Bar in Mesa, Chandler, Queen Creek and Surprise offers a 15 percent discount. Remember if you are a veteran always ask for a discount since most restaurants and businesses will give you one with a veteran ID.

Service Corp of Retired Executives wants to help veterans who are in business or want to start a business. SCORE will offer free attendance for 100 veterans, under a Bank of America grant, at its symposium 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Aug. 15 at Grand Canyon University Arena, 3300 W. Camelback Road. Google, GoDaddy, Leap Innovation and Infusionsoft are among businesses planning to participate. Information: scorephoenixsymposium.org. To get the code for free admission, contact Scott Schreiber at scott.schreiber@s4inc.net or 480-677-8971.

The Merritt Center in Payson still has room in its seven-day program for veterans, who have PTSD and need non-traditional therapy, in a beautiful setting at no cost to the veteran from Aug. 21-28. The program is educational and teaches techniques a vet can use to manage PTSD and create a new life mission. The program, meals and lodging are free to any returning combat vet from any war. Information: 928-474-4268.

A Health and Knowledge Fair for women veterans will be from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Aug. 17 with lunch provided at the Phoenix VA Health Care System, 650 E. Indian School Road. Although there is no child care available, youngsters may come with their mothers. Registration: azdvs.gov or call Nicole LaPella, 602-677-6751.

Operation Marshmallow, an organization that sends packages to troops overseas, will be having an event from 2-10 p.m. Aug. 17 with free food and music. They will be collecting donations for their shipping costs and to help homeless veterans. The event is at the Black Canyon VFW, 34801 S. Velda Rose in Black Canyon City off Interstate. Use the 242 exit. Information: Julie Stephens, 623-329-3568.

There are about 8.9 million veterans enrolled in the VA Health Care System, however there are 22.4 million veterans eligible for these benefits. You should enroll even if you don’t think you need them now.

Vietnam veterans please start making arrangements to attend the third annual event honoring Arizona's Vietnam veterans. This year the event will take place at 5:30 p.m. Oct. 5 at the Scottsdale Plaza Resort, 7200 N. Scottsdale Road. I attended the last two years and was very impressed by the speakers and the program. This year’s speaker will be General Anthony Zinni, USMC, (Ret). Cost is $45 per person with checks payable to the Arizona Military Museum, 9014 N. Wealth Road, Maricopa, AZ 85139. Information: 520-868-6777.

You can buy a memorial paver for the WWII Memorial at Wesley Bolin Park in Phoenix at GunstoSalutetheFallen.com. The memorial, led by Secretary of State Ken Bennett, will be finished and dedicated on Dec. 7 at the park. For many years, there has been an anchor and a signal tower from the USS Arizona sunk at Pearl Harbor. In addition, there will now be two gun barrels from the Arizona signifying the start of WWII and Battleship Missouri where the peace treaty was signed ending WWII. You may show your support by going to the website or request an application at the Secretary of State’s office, 602-542-6170. By Oct. 1, you may purchase a 4-inch by 8-inch brick paver for $125, 8-inch by 8-inch brick paver for $500 or 12-inch by 12-inch granite paver for $1,000. You may purchase for any reason. For more information, Kim Crawford, Secretary's office 602-542-6170. You may also send a check payable to: AZSOS - Guns To Salute The Fallen, 1700 W. Washington St., Seventh Floor, Phoenix, AZ 85007.