

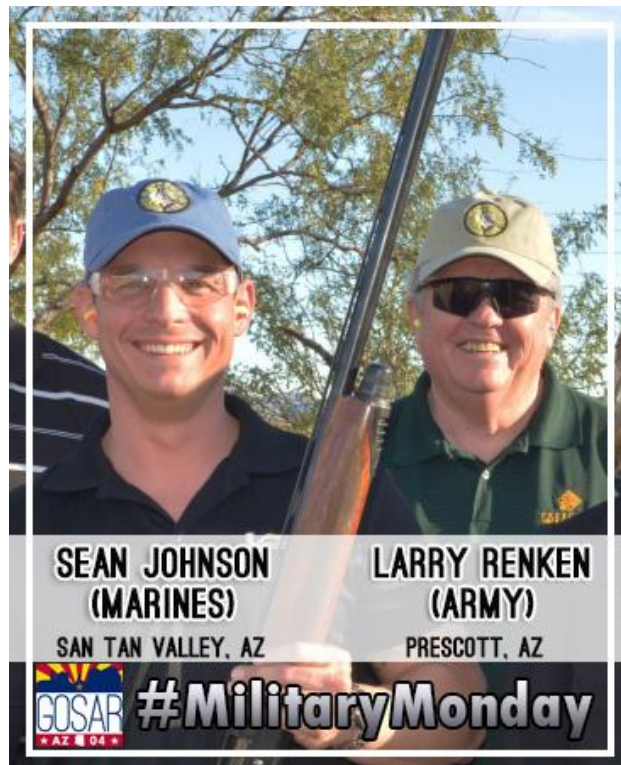


Dear Friend,

As you may already know, this year I have been honoring veterans and active duty service men and women from Arizona's 4th Congressional district in a weekly segment on my Facebook page called #MilitaryMonday. I believe these heroes deserve to be recognized for their dedication and sacrifice to this great country. These men and women are why we are able to maintain the freedoms we enjoy and appreciation should be shown to those who deserve it. I am enormously grateful for their contribution to our community, state and country. I consider it an honor to represent them and hope you will join me by thanking them for their service. If you know of a current or former member of the military that you would like to recognize for #MilitaryMonday, send me a message with their contact information at: <http://gosar.house.gov/contact-me> or [facebook.com/repgosar](https://www.facebook.com/repgosar) via direct message.

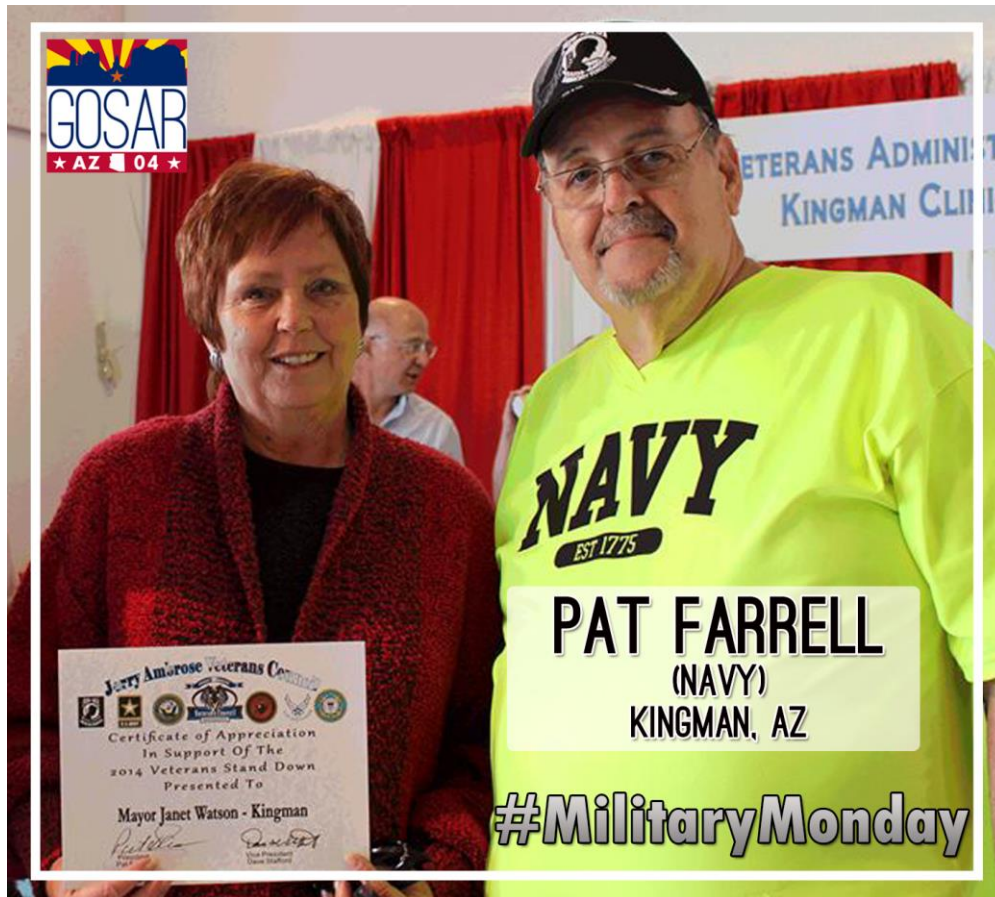
Below are the 9 featured stories from this year, highlighting the incredible careers of our own local heroes:

January 26, 2015: Sean Johnson and Larry Renken



I am extremely proud to have two outstanding veterans serving on my staff who continue to serve and support their fellow veterans. Sean Johnson served in the Marines and saw combat in Afghanistan. Larry Renken served in the Army and saw combat in Vietnam. Veterans know how to get the job done and I encourage all business owners to hire veterans like Sean and Larry.

February 2, 2015: Pat Farrell of Kingman, AZ:

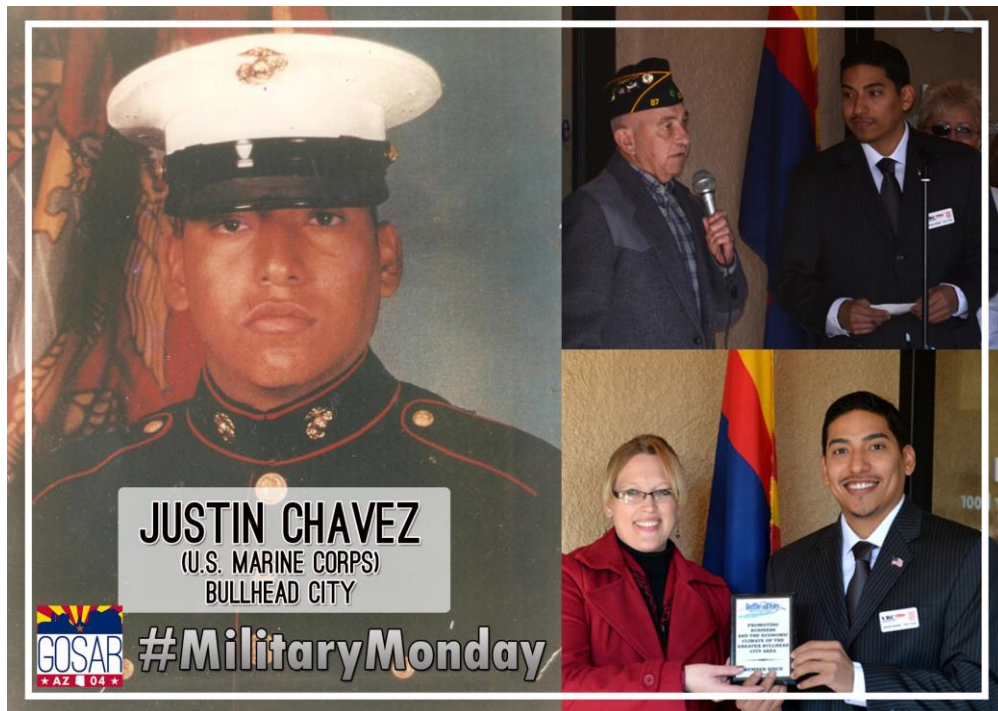


In January of 1968, Pat Farrell joined the United States Navy and served until November 19, 1971. He was assigned to the USS John F. Kennedy originally stationed in Oceana, Virginia for two tours of duty. Mr. Farrell's best memory from his time in the Navy was standing on the flight deck of the USS John F. Kennedy when they announced that Neil Armstrong landed on the moon. According to Pat, it was a very special moment because it was President Kennedy who led the United States in winning the space race.

Mr. Farrell confirmed that the military provided him with leading technical skills to do his job. It also taught him to lead, follow and work in a group to get the job done, learning the value of teamwork. "I'm glad I had the military experience; it really helped me out in life. It prepared me for gainful employment and everything else that happens," he said. Currently, Mr. Farrell is the president of Jerry Ambrose Veterans Council of Mohave County, a 501c3 that focuses on veterans helping veterans.

On behalf of a grateful state and nation, I want to sincerely thank Pat Farrell for his service and his sacrifice. It will always be my greatest honor to serve you as your Representative.

February 9, 2015: Justin Chavez of Bullhead City, AZ



After joining the United States Marine Corps in 2002, Justin Chavez was stationed at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina until 2005. He claims the military helped him to grow up, causing him to think and act differently, which he needed. “The military matured me in ways that I would not have been prior to the military. It gave me a great inner strength and patience I needed that I did not have before.” His best memories while in the military are of spending time with his fellow Marines, saying he really misses the comradery whether out in the field or in the barracks. Claiming they became like brothers, Justin told me, “My favorite part of being in the military is the bond you develop with fellow marines.”

Today Justin works for the Northern Arizona Veterans Resource Center in the Bullhead City location. This is one site of the Veterans Resource Centers of America which received a grant for SSVF (Supportive Services for Veterans’ Families). There are two other Arizona locations, Flagstaff and Prescott, with other locations in Nevada and California. The VRCA in Bullhead City serves homeless veterans in two regards: to help them get off the streets and into permanent housing or by helping veterans that are about to be evicted. They work strictly with low income veterans from Bullhead City but also cover all of Mohave County. “It’s a hard job, a tough job that we do, but it is rewarding. The veterans we serve makes doing our job a lot easier.” Justin believes the military helped him get to where he is today by preparing him for his career and allowing Justin to get his bachelor’s degree and a master’s degree with the

GI Bill.

On behalf of an incredibly grateful state and nation, I want to sincerely thank Justin Chavez for his military service and his continued efforts to help fellow veterans build a better life.

February 16, 2015: Greg Spiker from Dewey, AZ



Greg grew up in Dewey, Arizona and attended Bradshaw Mountain High School near Prescott Valley. Upon graduation, Greg originally joined the U.S. Air Force and served from 2002 until 2012. He was first stationed at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base in Tucson and then transferred to Fort Lewis in Washington State. During his 10 years, Greg did four tours in Iraq in 2006, 2007, 2009 and 2010. He then served in the horn of Africa for six months between 2011 and 2012.

Throughout this time, Greg received several awards, first as a meteorologist receiving the Outstanding Battlefield Combat Weather NCO of the Year as well as Outstanding Weather NCO while stationed at Luke Air Force Base in Phoenix as a Tech Sergeant. You can read more about Greg's impressive achievements here: <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=67978>

Greg was inspired to switch from the Air Force to the Army by a friend, Paul Josh Flynn, who served as a Blackhawk pilot and encouraged Greg to pursue a future in flight. Sadly, Paul Josh Flynn was killed in action in 2007 and this delayed Greg's pursuit of becoming a pilot in the Army. However, while serving in the horn of Africa, Greg crossed paths with several Army pilots and it motivated him to continue pursuing his dream. In 2012, Greg began Army aviation training and is currently stationed at Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

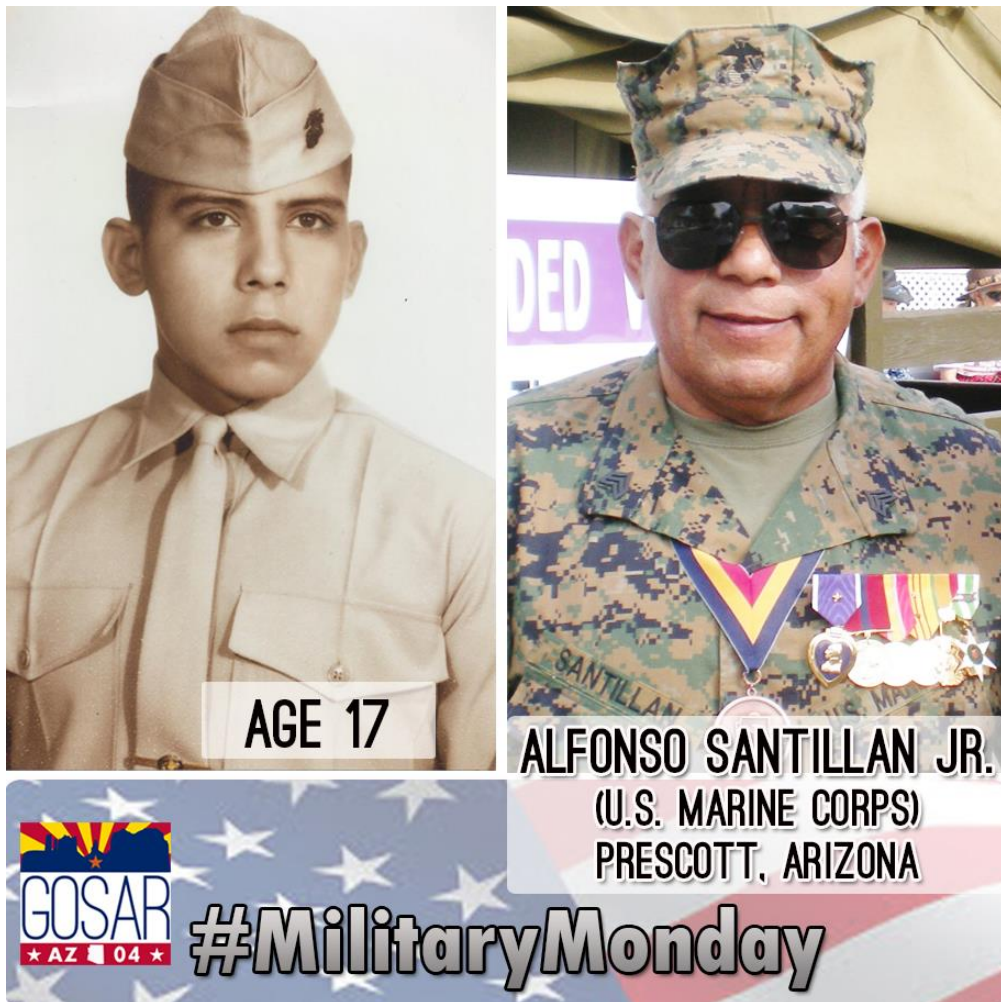
When asked about his best memory during his time in the military, Greg said it was his recent promotion to Chief Warrant Officer 2 which occurred just last month. Making the promotion even more special was Greg's cousin, SFC Wesley Welch, being able to attend and participate in the ceremony. Greg went on to say, "I feel fortunate for all the friends I've made during deployments, the relationships formed while isolated are unlike any other. The bond you have with those people is very unique. That's the best part in the military."

Greg affirmed that the military prepared him for the rest of his life and that it has made him more selfless. It enabled him to see a larger picture of the world and evaluate his own personal beliefs. "I entered the military when I was really young and my deployments showed how people in other countries experience life and what is important to them. That made me think about what was important to me."

Greg also added, "My friends joke with me that I'm a salesman for Arizona because I've lived in all these different places but it's made me miss Arizona and I talk about it all the time. It made me appreciate my home even more."

Greg, I know that I can speak for the entire state when I say that Arizona misses you and is enormously grateful for your continued service and sacrifice for our country. We love you and wish you a safe and speedy return.

February 23, 2015: Alfonso Santillan Jr. from Prescott, AZ



Alfonso has been a member of the Prescott community for 23 years after joining the Marine Corps in 1965 at the young age of 17. Alfonso was first stationed in San Diego before finally being shipped out on September 2, 1965 on the USS Mitchell to Okinawa, Japan as part of the Raider Battalion program, which was similar to the Navy SEALs.

Alfonso would go on to valiantly lead one of the battles in opposition to the TET offensive but was injured in July of 1968 resulting in his honorable discharge due to 60% permanent disability. Altogether, Alfonso served on two tours and seven campaigns during his four years of service earning him two Purple Hearts and two Presidential Unit Citations.

Even while recovering from his injuries, Alfonso could not help from serving his fellow Marines. He took on the heartbreaking task of acting as a liaison between the Marine Corps and the families who had lost loved ones in battle supporting them with final arrangements for fallen soldiers.

While recovering from his own injuries, Alfonso remembers working at a hospital

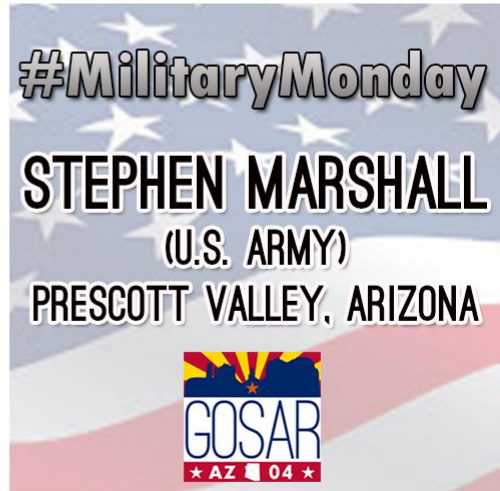
assisting a Sergeant Major to give out Purple Heart medals to the wounded. The Sergeant Major was so impressed by Alfonso and his service that he made it his mission to have Alfonso promoted to Sergeant despite being only 21 years old. “The gesture was one of the most heartfelt and memorable moments of my military career.”

Alfonso attributes the military for giving him his unbelievable strength and character. He said, “It has given me a willingness to help others.” He has passed his experiences on to his 19-year-old son, whose goal is to be a commissioned officer in the Marines after graduating college. Additionally, his 17-year-old daughter wants to join the Navy to become a Registered Nurse.

In 2009, Alfonso was inducted into the Arizona Veterans Hall of Fame, which is the highest honor awarded by the Governor for contributions to fellow veterans and Arizona citizens. Today, Alfonso hosts a Veterans radio program once a month discussing the latest news effecting Arizona’s veterans.

We are incredibly blessed to have such heroes living in our community and I am extremely proud to honor Alfonso’s heroic service in combat and his continued work helping other veterans.

March 2, 2015: Stephen Marshall from Prescott Valley, AZ



Stephen joined the Army in 2002 and served until 2010. He first began his tenure in Baumholder, Germany with the 1st Armored Division and then was stationed at Fort Benning, Georgia with the 3rd Brigade of the 3rd Infantry Division.

Stephen was deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom serving two tours, one for 15 months and the other for 12 months. During his deployments he helped the Iraqi people with rebuilding areas that had suffered severe destruction. He also served as a member of a command security detachment, protecting higher ranking service members.

Stephen said his favorite thing from his time in the Army was, "...comradery with my fellow soldiers and being able to help stabilize Iraq while helping the citizens of Iraq regain their freedom. Most of what I did over there was reconstruction of Iraqi infrastructure and security."

After returning home and retiring from the military in December 2010 he enrolled at Embry Riddle Aeronautical University in Prescott and graduated in Aeronautics. Following his graduation, Stephen made the decision to continue serving his community and ran for town councilman in Prescott Valley and was elected to the position in 2013.

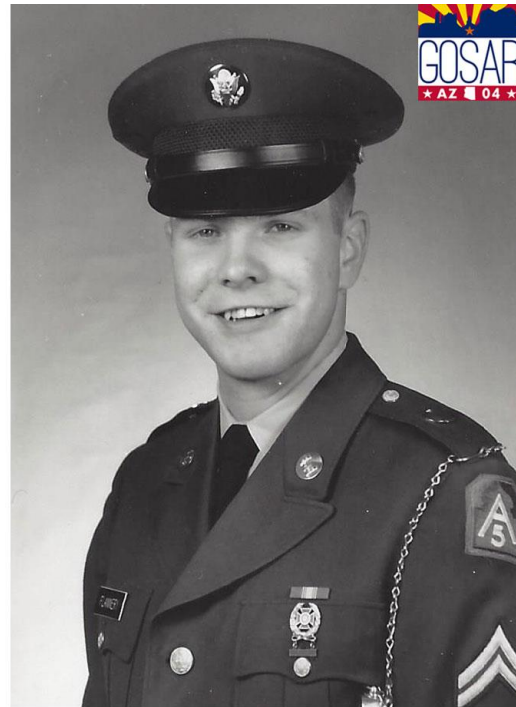
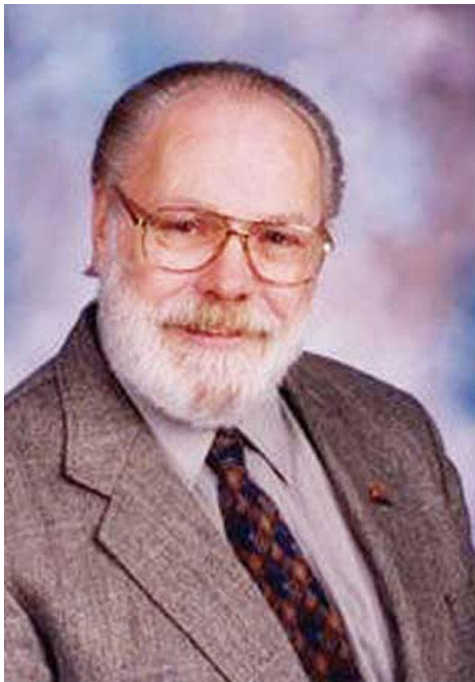
Helping fellow veterans has been Stephens's passion, specifically with the challenges of overcoming the stigma of PTSD and combating the high number of veterans who commit suicide.

"I want businesses to see that veterans are not broken and actually make excellent employees. With the skills and morals instilled from day one in the military, our veterans are the country's greatest resource and it is my goal to help people recognize this." Stephen also added, "The main things that I took away from my time in the military were discipline and respect for others. I gained friendships that will last a lifetime and I consider the men and women that I served with to be my brothers and sisters."

On April 18, 2015 in Prescott Valley, Stephen is helping to host a veterans jobs fair with other veterans organizations and local businesses. Their goal is to get at least 100 veterans hired that day. [Click HERE for more information about this event.](#)

Thank you Stephen for your valiant service in helping to rebuild not only Iraq, but also the lives of our veteran's right here in Prescott Valley.

March 9, 2015: Mike Flannery from Prescott Valley, AZ



Mike's career in the Army lasted from 1967 to 1970. He completed Advanced Individual Training (AIT) at Fort Leonard Wood and then served in Vietnam. After suffering an injury, he completed the rest of his tour in Valley Forge Medical Hospital. During his service, Mike remembers his best memories being the comradery, stating, "You [become] good friends. You look out for them and they look out for you."

Mike said the Army prepared him for meeting challenges and obstacles head on, "finding strategies to overcome challenges." He continued to carry this attitude throughout his life including his service as a Prescott Valley Town Councilman from 1998 until June 2011 where he gained the respect of many including Mayor Harvey Skoog.

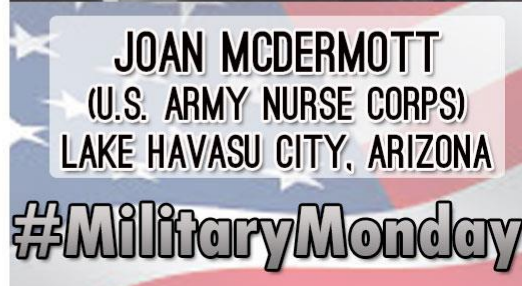
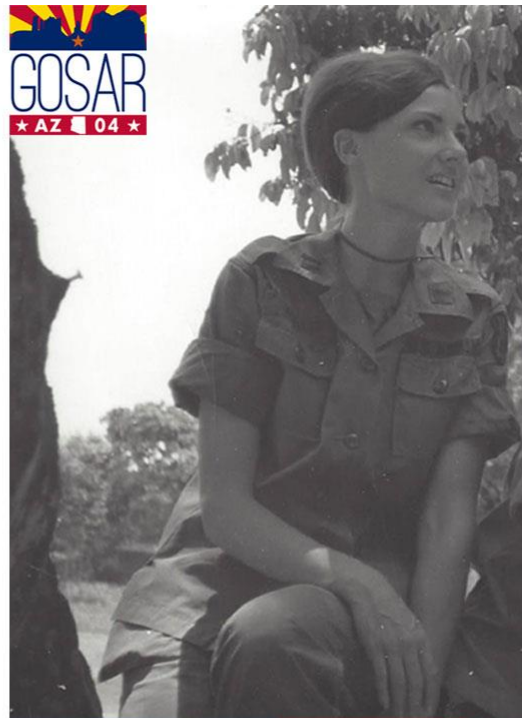
(From the Prescott Daily Courier)

"Flannery has been a 'very conscientious councilman,' said Mayor Harvey Skoog, who has served with Flannery since 2004. 'He has been a very good partner on the council. He has carried his share of the load. Mike has been a good man.' Flannery, a Prescott Valley resident for about 25 years who formerly lived in Prescott for 10 years, served six years on the Parks and Recreation Commission before joining the council. He also

chaired the economic development subcommittee of the 1994 Prescott Valley General Plan Committee.”

We are extremely lucky to have veterans who continue to show the same dedication and loyalty to our communities that they demonstrated during their military careers. No words can thank a man like Mike Flannery for all that he has done to build a better life for others.

March 16, 2015: Joan McDermott from Lake Havasu City, AZ



Joan McDermott attended Walther Memorial Hospital School of Nursing in Chicago to become a registered nurse when she was only 17 years old. She then worked in a suburban hospital in surgery for 2 years before joining the U.S. Army Nurse Corps during the Vietnam War. In late 1967, Joan was sent to Saigon arriving a month before the TET Offensive. While serving at an Army hospital, enemy snipers attacked the area and forced Joan to sleep under a table in the hospital for 3 nights to avoid the gunfire. Sadly, a casualty of this attack included one of her childhood neighbors from growing up in Wisconsin. It was a difficult beginning to her service in the Army to say the least.

Despite this harrowing experience, Joan said one of the best parts of the military was,

“the comradery, no question about it. You never experienced anything like that especially in a war zone. It makes you feel like you’re closer to your comrades and family. When people close to you end up as casualties to the battlefield it really hits hard.”

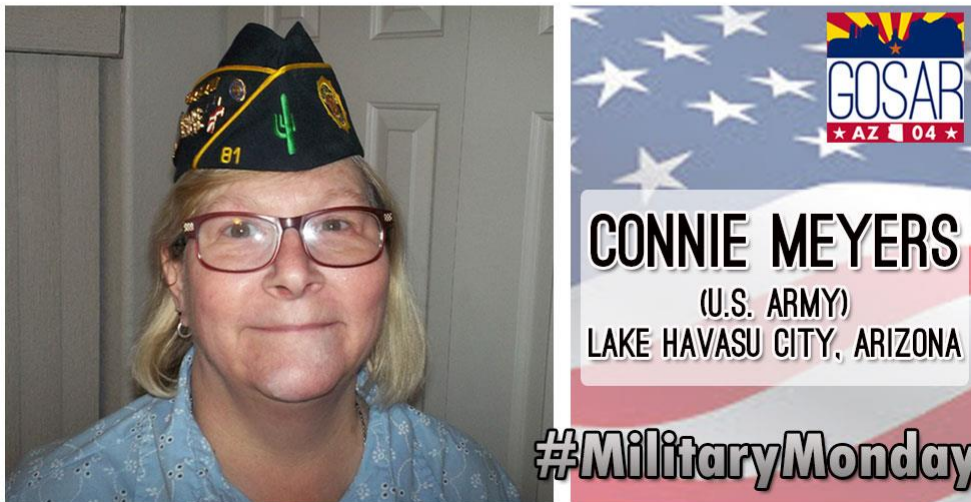
Joan remembers one of the better memories of her service being “... the opportunity in Saigon to get to know the Vietnamese people. A few of us would go and pack up our jeep and do what we called MedCAPs. We would go to orphanages and give the kids there shots or patch up their injuries. We would also go to hospitals to help people and when local surgeons couldn’t perform procedures we would bring the patients back to our hospital and do the procedures there. Having Vietnamese friends gave me a unique perspective.” Living on the other side of the world in Southeast Asia gave her the opportunity to see the world through other people’s eyes. “When you’re looking at the world from the perspective of other people and other countries, the U.S. looks quite different. It broadened my perspective on inter-dependency of all citizens of the earth.”

In recent years, Joan has played an important role in the Lake Havasu veterans community. She credits this participation to a convention in Phoenix that inspired her to get involved. "As a female veteran, I didn’t really think of myself as a vet, I was a mom, a nurse and married to an army officer. It wasn’t until I came to Lake Havasu and went to a convention of women in the military in Phoenix. I was asked why I wasn’t a member of Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) and I responded because I didn’t realize I qualified. That brought it full circle that I was a veteran and I wanted to help serve other veterans.”

After this revelation Joan joined the VFW and became the Commander of post 9401 where she is currently serving in her second year. After she finishes her service at the VFW she hopes to return to nursing part-time. The VFW works with numerous other veterans organizations as well as the Veterans Treatment Court, a program that helps veterans get the proper assistance with substance abuse or combat mental health issues to help keep them from becoming involved in the criminal justice system. There is a Veterans Court in Lake Havasu that is now expanding into Bullhead city representing rural veterans. Joan works very closely with vets in the area and is very proud of it. “I enjoy every moment of it, it’s really wonderful to continue to be able to give back to my country.”

On behalf of a grateful state and nation, I want to sincerely thank Joan for her service and her sacrifice in times of war and peace and continuing her efforts to help fellow veterans. It will always be my greatest honor to serve you as your Representative.

March 23, 2015: Connie Meyers from Lake Havasu City, AZ



In 1972 after reaching the mandatory age of 21, Connie volunteered to join the U.S. Army and that summer reported to Fort McClellan, AL for basic training. Eventually, Connie was

In 1972 after reaching the mandatory age of 21, Connie volunteered to join the U.S. Army and that summer reported to Fort McClellan, AL for basic training. Eventually, Connie was sent to Torii Station in Okinawa, Japan in 1973 to serve as a Communications Security Specialist in the Army Security Agency (ASA) Division of the National Security Agency during the Vietnam War. Connie gained top secret crypto access clearance for code breaking while serving as the only female in her unit. During her time overseas, her division would have TDY (temporary duty) missions to Thailand, Taiwan, Cambodia, Vietnam and Laos.

There were many difficult moments during Connie’s military career apart from the challenges of being the only woman in her unit. She claims her worst memory was finding out that the wildlife, cockroaches and vermin grow much larger in a tropical climate. However, it wasn’t all bad. Her unique position serving in the ASA allowed her the opportunity to meet with high ranking military officials that she would not have had serving in another position. Connie recalled one of her best memories being “the opportunity to experience a different culture and find out the rest of the world did

not live like we do in the U.S. It made me appreciate just what we have here in the USA.”

In Okinawa, the only other American women, besides the Japanese, were nurses stationed on the other side of the island. Connie had to learn how to get along with a lot of different people; especially the Japanese. “I tried to learn Japanese and (the locals) would help teach me. By the end of my time there I couldn’t read or write it but I could understand what they said to me”. In addition to developing skills to work with other people, Connie believed that the military helped her understand the cultures of others. “We aren’t all from the United States and we don’t all think the same way or worship the same way or celebrate the same way.”

After her time overseas she returned back home to Fort Devens, MA in 1974 and taught at the ASA School through the rest of her military service attaining the rank of Specialist 5 (E-5). Connie left the military in May of 1975. Following that, she became a proofreader for an English and Spanish newspaper for 10 years and worked in various other jobs. In 2013 Connie moved to Lake Havasu City where she actively participates in the American Legion. She is the only dual member, serving as the Chaplain and is part of the Ladies Auxiliary because her husband is also a veteran and serves as 1st Vice Commander.

As a final thought, Connie said, “I think the Army was a very good influence in my life, made me grow up and made me see other people differently.” Connie’s unique story of courage, resiliency and service is like none other and I am extremely grateful for her sacrifice and dedication to helping defend our country.

Remember: If you know of a current or former member of the military that you would like to recognize for #MilitaryMonday, send me a message with their contact information at: <http://gosar.house.gov/contact-me> or [facebook.com/repgosar](https://www.facebook.com/repgosar) via direct message.

As always, you can follow everything I am working on in Arizona and Washington, D.C. through my website (<http://gosar.house.gov>) on Twitter [@repgosar](https://twitter.com/repgosar), or through [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/repgosar) at Representative Paul Gosar.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paul A. Gosar" followed by a stylized flourish.

Paul A. Gosar D.D.S
Member of Congress



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