



Arizona Veterans Hall of Fame Society

TWELEVE POST 41 MEMBERS

BACON, NICKY (NICK)



Name Bacon, Nicky (Nick)

Class 2001

Biography Staff Sergeant, U.S. Army, Company B, 4th Battalion, 21st Infantry, 11th Infantry Brigade, America Division. Entered service in Phoenix, AZ. Cited for action on 26 August 1968 in the Republic of Vietnam. In the face of intense enemy fire, squad leader Bacon took charge of two decimated platoons, personally destroying a hostile bunker with grenades, an enemy gun crew in a single-handed effort, and an antitank weapon. Despite heavy fire, he directed fire into the enemy position from the exposed deck of a tank until several wounded comrades were evacuated. Recipient of Medal of Honor and a Life Time member of The American Legion Post 41.

BRAUN, FATHER ALBERT



Name Braun, Father Albert

Class 2001

Biography (1889-1993) Priest, Army Chaplain, Prisoner of War, Missionary, Community Builder, Educator. As an Army Chaplain, served with General Pershing in WWI, and in the Philippines during the siege of Bataan and the fall of Corregidor in WWII. Captured and held as prisoner of war for 44 months. Received a Purple Heart and two Silver Stars for his heroic service. Came to Arizona in 1949 and assisted the poor in McNary, Parker on the Colorado River, and St. John's Indian Mission. As a Franciscan missionary, built four churches and a school in Phoenix while serving the people of the Southwest in Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas. He was a teacher at St. Mary's High School. A memorial to Father Braun was dedicated at Wesley Bolin Plaza on March 4, 2001. Also served as Chaplin of The American Legion Post 41.

GOLDWATER, BARRY



Name Goldwater, Barry

Class 2001

Biography (1909-1998) Born in Phoenix, Barry Goldwater became a United States Senator, Presidential Candidate, and Major General in the Air Force Reserve. Served during WWII flying transport missions in both the Pacific and European theaters. Retired from the Air Force Reserve in 1967 with 15,000 flying hours. With a great passion for all things Arizona, he founded the Arizona Historical Foundation; assembled one of the world's largest Hopi Kachina collections and donated it to the Heard Museum; became one of the widest exhibited photographers in the world; and was an author of 16 books and numerous articles and commentaries. Life Time member of American Legion Post 41.

MARTINEZ, RAY



Name Martinez, Ray

Class 2001

Biography Born in Tempe, Arizona, in 1918. Served in the U.S. Navy during WWII. Tour of service included supporting forces for many of the Pacific island invasions, including Iwo Jima. Following military service, became active in many Phoenix charitable activities, concentrating especially on the Special Olympics and the treatment of handicapped children. Former commander of the Arizona Department of the American Legion and American Legion Post 41.. Served as Children and Youth Commission Chairman at Department level for 27 years and as a member of the national commission for 25 years starting in 1951 when elected chairman of the western states commission. Oversaw disbursement of over one million dollars to financially stressed veterans as administrator of Legion Temporary Financial Assistance Program for 27 years. Instrumental in establishing the Arizona State Veterans Home. Strong proponent of the Constitutional Amendment to protect the Flag. Major contributor to the Ira Hayes memorial service at the State Capitol. Continues support of many veterans' organizations and associates.

VARGAS, JAY



Name Vargas, Jay

Class 2001

Biography Major, USMC, Company G, 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines, 9th Marine Amphibious Brigade. Born in Winslow, AZ on 29 July 1937. Cited for action on 1 May 1968, in the Republic of Vietnam. Although wounded from action the previous day, then-Captain Vargas led three combined companies in an attack across an open rice paddy against a fortified village. Organizing and reorganizing and again wounded, Captain Vargas inspired his men to continue their advance. A number of enemy bunkers were destroyed and the objective seized. Though wounded a third time during the three day battle, Captain Vargas continued to lead, and, observing his battalion commander wounded, proceeded to carry him to safety. Recipient of Medal of Honor and a Life Time member of The American Legion Post 41.

VALENZUELA, MARCO (TONY)



Name Valenzuela, Marco (Tony)

Class 2002

Biography Born in Patagonia, Arizona in 1930. Enlisted in the U.S. Air Force in 1950, serving four years, one year in Korea and Japan. Graduated from Arizona State University. Helped organize "El Burrito," a tortilla factory run by 40 elderly women in a low-income area of Tempe. Former director of the Head Start Program and established a Head Start Mobile Dental Unit to serve the program's participants. Responsible for establishing a Veterans' Recognition Day at the Arizona State Fair as well as a Veterans' Booth at the fair to provide information on all topics of interest to veterans. A strong advocate leading to the establishment of the National Memorial Cemetery of Arizona, he also was a leader in the creation of an Arizona State Veterans Home. A former chairman of Unified Arizona Veterans, he was Department Commander of the American Legion in 1991 after joining the Legion in 1954. Served on Senator DeConcini's committee to review applicants for the Military Academies. Past Commander and Life Time member of The American Legion Post 41.

OTHON, FLORENCIO (LENCHO)



Name Othon, Florencio (Lencho)

Class 2004

Biography Born in Phoenix, Arizona, in 1919. Served in U.S. Army in WWII. Former Arizona Department Commander, American Legion: led membership attainment to exceed 3 million members in 1988-89. Past chairman, Unified Arizona Veterans. Helped lead effort to bring about funding and land acquisition for Arizona State Veterans Home and continues volunteer support to Home. Has over 20 years of service to the Arizona State Fair Veterans Recognition Committee and over 15 years to the National Memorial Cemetery of Arizona Support Committee. As a long time Lions Club member, leads fundraising to support Del Webb Hospital, Peoria Little League, a camp for children with special needs in Lakeside, AZ, and other charitable and community programs. Continues to volunteer one day a week patrolling the Sun City area with the Maricopa County Sheriff's Posse. Past Commander and Life Time Member of The American Legion Post 41.

MARTINEZ, PETER



Name Martinez, Peter

Class 2009

Biography Born in El Paso, Texas, in 1932. Enlisted, USAF, in 1951, Korea/Vietnam veteran. Master Sergeant, Retired, 1976. Graduate, Florida State University. Sales, industrial relations, and federal civil service. Member of many civic, social, fraternal and patriotic organizations. Participates in numerous fund raising events/community projects that provide food to the needy, assistance to senior citizens and the physically challenged, junior golfers, and hospitalized/homeless veterans. Volunteer English tutor to foreign students. Member, AZ Dept of Education Emeritus Program. Member, Governor's Task Force on veterans affairs. Supported VA medical centers in Prescott and Phoenix, received 400 hour volunteer pin. Volunteered at Phoenix Sky Harbor Terminal 2, Military Lounge. Member, VFW and KWVA; former State Commander, AZ KWVA. AZ Commanding Officer, National Defense Force Service Command, responsible for organizing/maintaining a state-wide organization of volunteers. Is a Member of The American Legion Post 41.

SANCHEZ, LIONEL



Name Sanchez, Lionel

Class 2012

Biography Born in Phoenix, Arizona in 1947, Lionel Sanchez saw active duty in Vietnam in 1968-1969 in the US Marine Corps, attaining the rank of Sergeant. After graduating from Arizona State University in the 1970's, he was commissioned and served as an Infantry Officer in the US Army in Korea. He served 8 years as a Veteran's Representative, Congressman Ed Pastor's office. Since 2010, he has advocated on behalf of veterans as a Commissioner on the Arizona Veterans' Service Advisory Commission, Board Member on the U.S. VETS Advisory Board (transitional housing for homeless vets), and volunteer at the Arizona StandDowns and especially the State Veteran Home, Phoenix. An active member and Past President of Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 432 Phoenix, he helped to raise \$10,000 for scholarships for children of veterans. Is a member of The American Legion Post 41.

BROCK-PERINI, RITA



Name Brock-Perini, Rita

Class 2013

Biography Born in Phoenix, Arizona in 1938. Commissioned First Lieutenant, Air Force Nurse Corps in 1968 with service in Texas (where she was promoted to Captain) and Arizona until 1971. Resident of Mesa, Arizona. Served as Federal inspector and nurse consultant for the US Dept of Health and Human Services in Georgia, retiring as principal medical fraud investigator in 2003. Since 2004 Rita has served as a Commissioner on the Phoenix Military Veterans Commission, an advisory group to the Mayor. In 2006 she co-chaired the Committee which established the Veterans Hospitality Room now known as USO Phoenix, Sky Harbor Airport. Since 2007 Rita, a three-term Vice President, Veterans Medical Leadership Council, has helped veterans by advocating quality medical and mental health care for veterans, and raising funds to help veterans experiencing hard times. Is a member of The American Legion Post 41.

ALDECOA, JOSE JUAN (JOHN)



Name	Jose Juan Aldecoa
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Class	2014
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Biography	
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Born in Nogales, Mexico in 1947. Active duty, US Air Force, Communication Equipment Installation and Repairman, 1965-1966. In 1972 John joined the American Legion, has served as a member of the American Legion National Legislative Council for the past 16 years and the National Convention Commission Advisory Board, 2007-2013. From 1998 to 2014 John served as the Chief Operating Officer/Adjutant of the 50,000-member American Legion of Arizona. John also serves on the Arizona Boys State Board of Directors as Counselor and Administrator for the annual program at Northern Arizona University since 1998, working with over 300 students. John volunteered countless hours to Little League Baseball, serving as coach, umpire and past President of the San Xavier League in Tucson. John was appointed by Governor Napolitano to the Arizona Military Family Relief Fund Advisory Committee in 2007.

MENDOZA, MANUEL



Name	Manuel Mendoza
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Class	2014
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Biography	<p>(1922-2001) Born in Miami, Arizona. Known as the “Arizona Kid” for his heroism during WWII at Mount Battaglia, Italy, October 4, 1944. While serving as platoon sergeant, Company B, 350th Infantry Battalion, 88th Infantry Division. Wounded, and outnumbered, Mendoza singlehandedly broke up a fierce German counterattack on his unit’s position. His actions earned award of the Distinguished Service Cross. Mendoza reenlisted from the Arizona Army National Guard to serve in the Korean War where he was wounded in battle. In 2002, Congress called for the review of war records of certain veterans. Mendoza was among 24 Army veterans awarded the Medal Of Honor by the President on March 18, 2014. He is the 24th Arizonan to receive the Medal of Honor.</p>
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