



Department of Arizona

John J. Morris

Post 62

Unit 62

Squadron 62

ALR 62

Richard H. Bieri Memorial Report 2014-2015

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Ronald Reagan said: "Let us be sure that those that come after-- will say of us in our time, that in our time we did everything that could be done." The John J. Morris Legion Family is proud to have delivered an outstanding set of cooperative program outcomes for veterans, family, children, and the local community.

As a family, Post 62 worked hard to ensure that **Americanism** was present and love of country was visible at every event and every day of the year. Together they celebrated Memorial, Independence, Gold Star Mother's, Patriot's, Veteran's and Pearl Harbor Day as well as the American Legion birthday. In addition to the patriotic speeches & music, the Legion family color guard posted colors at all of these open-to-the-public events. The family color guard also posted colors at memorial services held for brothers and sisters that passed during the year, as well as at several local nursing homes and a local cemetery. They also worked with a Post-chartered Boy Scout troop: teaching flag etiquette, working together to place flags at veteran gravesites on holidays, and enabling the scouts to assist with ceremonies at Post 62. Additionally, they conducted a class encouraging Scouts to learn and assist with proper flag retirement procedures. The color guard traveled to Phoenix International Airport on more the one occasion to welcome home Honor Flight participants, including one sponsored by Unit 62. ALR 62 participated in a Veteran's Day flag ceremony at a local school and Iwo Jima parades along with many other patriotic events. Appeals were mailed to all local places of worship and on September 11th bells were rung and a moment of silence was held in remembrance. Members volunteered to cheer at the American Legion Western Regional Baseball tournaments in Surprise AZ. Together, 18 boys and 23 girls sponsored by Legion Family 62 will participate in the Girls/Boys State programs.

Children & youth is a high priority in this Legion Family. As an example, they supported Operation Kids at Luke AFB. Aimed at teaching children what their parents are experiencing, the program enacts mock enlistment, boot camp, deployment, and debriefing for 200 children. Every child was presented with a GI Josh dog and they were a great hit! Another popular program is the annual Christmas party held for children of deployed parents. The Legion donated the food, ALR donated funds, Squadron donated toys for all of the children, and the

Unit had arts, crafts, magicians, petting zoo, face painters, and Mr. & Mrs. Clause. It was an amazing day for all involved and the entire Legion family came together to ensure everyone had a smile on their face. Working together, gift cards for school shoes, back packs filled with school supplies, trips to laser tag and mini golf and much more was provided for local children that have a parent stationed at Luke AFB. Additionally, a young active-duty family with a 7 year old son and infant quintuplets was “adopted” by 62. The Dad is in the Air Force and Mom is a veteran. Baby registry items were delivered, extra hands were there to give mom assistance, homemade meals continue to be delivered on a regular basis. Thanksgiving and Christmas meals also included presents for everyone.

Legislatively, this year started with a lot of local concerns that received national attention regarding the Arizona VA health system. Together, members attended town hall meetings with State Senators and were televised demonstrating support for veterans and spouses. In November, the Legion family hosted a Veteran’s forum that was open to the public. All candidates running for Governor of Arizona were invited to speak and field questions. Then-candidate Governor Ducey was in attendance.

Supporting **Veterans** is another key priority at Post 62. Post 62 hosted a Veteran’s Crisis Command center where 85 veterans received assistance immediately and doctor appointments were setup within a week. The event also included information on housing, jobs, and suicide prevention. Auxiliary members greeted and checked in guests, served drinks and lunches and helped service officers and VA staff in any way they could. In addition to member-donated cleaning supplies, bedding, appliances and personal consumables, generous monetary donations were made to local homeless veteran’s shelters and transitional housing facilities. Visits and donations were made to Mary Ellen’s Place, a shelter for women vets, in honor of the Department President’s Special Project “Women Veterans”. Donations and art supplies were delivered to the Prescott VA. Members assisted with gift wrapping and shopping. Lap robes with a value in excess of \$30,000 were handmade and delivered across this great state to any veteran in need. Excitingly, a member who is a WWII veteran was sent by the Unit on an Honor Flight. Two separate luncheon events were hosted at the Phoenix VA for blind

women veterans. Each veteran received a gift, but more importantly, Legion family members who attended, including National ALA President Janet Jefford, were entertained by their wonderful stories. Poppies have been distributed throughout the year, and the foyer of Post 62 has been beautifully decorated with poppies and Flanders Field poem. Generous donations were also made to the Fisher House and to Creative Arts. Members participated in the city of Peoria Veteran's Day 5K family run and in a Wounded Warrior golf tournament in Sun City.

The John J. Morris family teamed up with another post and held a ceremony and luncheon for 8 local WWII veterans who received the French Legion of Honor medal. The French consulate was there to present the awards along with several local dignitaries and local Press. So many Legion family members attended that it was standing room only. Post 62 hosted a dinner reception for ALA National President Janet Jefford. It was a huge success with Legion, Auxiliary Department and Detachment officers on hand to welcome her. On behalf of Governor Ducey, Wanda Wright, the newly confirmed Head of Arizona Department of Veterans Affairs presented a Gubernatorial Proclamation.

Monetary donations for supplies and postage were made and many members assisted the Military Family Support Group sending packages to troops every month. Donations were made to Operation Comfort Warriors.

Community service and education often go hand in hand around 62. Thousands of dollars are spent each year providing a clothing pantry to help a local school district in a low income area. Unit 62 makes sure it is always stocked with socks, underclothes, sweatshirts, shoes, and jeans. Gift cards are also made available for shoes to be purchased. In addition, a food drive was held for families at these schools for Thanksgiving and Christmas. A total of 12 baskets with all of the fixings were donated including the turkey! Unit 62 participated in Give 10 to Education with school supplies and National Education Week with goodies and thank yous for teachers and staff. Bookmarks and comic books were provided on Read Across America Day. In addition, 3 scholarships were made for students attending school trips to Washington D.C. Members participated in a Patriot's Day golf event to

raise funds for scholarships for children of disabled or deceased veterans. Many members of the Post 62 Family raised funds for nursing scholarships by participating in a M*A*S*H party held at the Post.

Also as part of Community Service, \$1,000 and hundreds of pounds of food were donated to local food banks. Numerous local families in need were given financial support. Additionally, this Legion family took action when another local Post was ready to shut its doors. Within 24 hours, Post 62 Legion, Auxiliary, and Squadron members hosted a car wash and appealed to all Post 62 members to patronize the car wash, the 50/50 and their post. Not only was \$1400 earned, soon thereafter food was donated and a dinner was held at post 105 to help raise additional funds. What an awesome show of support from one Legion family to another!

When it comes to **Public Relations**, size really does matter. In total, John J. Morris American Legion Family was published with 502 inches of column text, 24 color and 16 black & white news photos, 8 television appearances, and an untrackable number of Facebook views and shares. Virtually every Legion Family program has been reported in local newspapers.

There were many **community and social** events: Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans, Valentine Shop, Senior Prom, Legion Birthday Bash, Art & craft fair, Auxiliary Birthday, Marine Corps Birthday Ball, Girls State Day at the Ballpark with members on field, security volunteers at the Moving Wall, Scholastic Youth Shooting Sports fundraiser and banquet, 2 Blood Drives and much more. With public relations and local media support, many of these events were successful in engaging the community at large.

In all, with over 24,000 service hours reported, total monetary and in kinds donation totals of Americanism \$2500, Children & Youth \$18,000, Community Service \$3000, Education \$2300, and VA&R with slightly more than \$76,000 and another \$100,000 worth of coupons sent overseas, this Legion family has demonstrated teamwork and the uncommon results that come with it.

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Approved By Unit Vote May 19th 2015

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