

November 9, 2009

Veterans Day brings many events to E.V.

By Michelle Reese
Tribune



Small remembrance markers along with British flags and wreaths are placed at the City of Mesa Cemetery by the graves of RAF pilots who lost their lives while training at Falcon Field during World War II following a ceremony by the Daughters of the British Empire and the Falcon Field Association. Nov. 8, 2009.

Tribune

The East Valley is observing Veterans Day and honoring its armed forces veterans through a variety of activities and events taking place this week. Here is a breakdown by city:

CHANDLER

Chandler will unveil an interpretive history kiosk to recognize World War II veterans at 12:30 p.m. Wednesday at Dr. A.J. Chandler Park, 3 S. Arizona Ave. At 1:30 p.m. a panel of veterans will share their stories at the Chandler Museum, 178 E. Commonwealth Ave. The kiosk is part of the city's History in Your Own Backyard program, which shares local history with residents in city parks. It highlights the story of the honor roll billboard that was built in the park in May 1943, at the height of World War II. The sign listed the names of men and women serving in the military who came from Chandler and small neighboring communities like Higley, Queen Creek, Chandler Heights and Goodyear. By April 1945, the honor roll featured more than 700 names. A permanent veterans memorial was erected in 1949.

GILBERT

Gilbert's fifth annual Veterans Day celebration will be held 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Tuesday at the Gilbert Municipal Center, 50 E. Civic Center Drive, near Gilbert and Warner roads. The event will feature historic military vehicles and several color guards. Arizona Attorney General Terry Goddard will speak. Mesquite High School's wind ensemble, led by Ron Andre, will perform. A dinner donated by Gilbert restaurants will be served to guests following the ceremony. The event is expected to attract about 200 to 250 visitors. For information visit www.ci.gilbert.az.us.

GILBERT

Veterans are invited to attend the Gilbert Learning Center's Veterans Day celebration Tuesday at the school, 7007 E. Guadalupe Road, Mesa. The school is especially looking for veterans who served in World War II. The day's events include a continental breakfast, Junior ROTC Color Guard ceremony, a veterans discussion with students and a delicatessen-style lunch. The Gilbert Learning Center is the Gilbert Unified School District's alternative school. Veterans who want to participate, or anyone who would like to attend, is asked to call student council sponsor Larry Dexter at (480) 507-0519.

GILBERT

The Higley Unified School District will hold its second annual Veterans Day celebration at 9:15 a.m. Tuesday at Higley High School's football field and performing arts center, 4068 E. Pecos Road, Gilbert.

The celebration will honor veterans with a flag ceremony, Patriot Guard presentation, introduction of veterans, dedication to the missing in action, a helicopter landing and a flyover by the Commemorative Air Force. The keynote speaker will be retired Marine Corps 1st Sgt. Gil Contreras.

Veterans who would like to attend can RSVP by calling (480) 279-9000 or e-mailing rsvp@husd.org [rsvp@husd.org].

MESA

Mesa's Pierce Condon, a student who won an art competition through the Armed Services YMCA, will have his artwork displayed Nov. 16 at the annual United Service Organizations/Maryland Aviation Administration "Salute to Veterans and Their Military Families" reception in Washington, D.C. His artwork will also appear in the official Armed Services YMCA National Military Family Month 2009 poster. Pierce is the son of Command Sgt. Daniel T. Condon of the U.S. National Guard and Jocelyn Condon.

MESA

The Mesa Veterans Day parade will begin 11 a.m. Wednesday at Center Street and Third Place and travel south on Center Street to First Avenue. This year's theme is "Honoring Our Vietnam Veterans." The parade marshals will represent all five branches of the United States military. The marshals are Jim Ashley, Army; Tom Schoemig, Navy; Donald Waldron, Air Force; Eddie Washington, Marines; and Richard Bonney, Coast Guard. They will be followed by a car representing a missing man. Only the driver will be inside.

MESA

The first "Veteran Invasion" will be held 1 p.m. Wednesday in the Theatre District at Mesa Riverview. It is a daylong festival and concert celebrating of Veterans Day. Activities include a GI obstacle course, Patriot Guard ride, displays from vendors and nonprofit organizations, and live music at Toby Keith's I Love This Bar and Grill.

MESA

A Veterans Day commemoration will be held at 4 p.m. Wednesday at Mesa's Mountain View Funeral Home and Cemetery, 7900 E. Main St. The new "Wall of Peace" will be dedicated at this ceremony, which will include an honor guard and musical accompaniment.

PHOENIX

The Phoenix Police Public Affairs Bureau will honor its veterans, many of whom are still active Reserve and National Guard members, during a ceremony 10:30 a.m. Tuesday at the Phoenix Downtown Sheraton Hotel, Phoenix Ballroom. 340 N. Third St.

SCOTTSDALE

Now through the end of November, MyStudio in Scottsdale is offering free recorded video greetings for the public to send messages to armed service personnel and veterans. MyStudio is a self-contained, high-definition recording studio. Five-minute sessions normally cost \$20. Once the greetings are complete, they will appear online. To see them, go to MyStudio.net and click on "greetings" under "video categories."

VALLEYWIDE

US Airways employees will deliver plane-shaped chocolates to patients in the Phoenix Veterans Affairs Health Care System. Thursday's event, "Sweet Delights Take Flight," is to honor and thank veterans at the Carl T. Hayden VA Medical Center and Arizona State Veteran Home. It started in 2004 with America West Airlines and is now a national event. Volunteers will visit more than 2,500 veterans in the airline's nine hubs and focus cities.

STATEWIDE

Military veterans and current members of any service branch and their families can use Bureau of Land Management recreation sites free on Wednesday.

Fees will be waived at: Virgin River Gorge Recreation Area; Kingman's Burro Creek, Wild Cow Springs and Windy Point recreation sites; Lake Havasu's Empire Landing and Crossroads Campground and Bullfrog, Bass Point and Quail Hollow day use areas; Phoenix's Painted Rock Petroglyph site and campground; Safford's Hot Well Dunes Recreation Area; Tucson's St. David Cienega/Land Corral, Fairbank Historic Townsite, San Pedro House and Hereford Bridge Trailheads; and Yuma's Squaw Lake Campground and Boat Launch, Senator Wash Boat Ramp and Day Use Area, Senator Wash North and South Shore Campgrounds, Betty's Kitchen Watchable Wildlife Area, Oxbow Recreation and Wildlife Area and Ehrenberg Sandbowl Off-Highway Vehicle Area.