



# 2017 Statewide Symposium in Support of Service Members, Veterans & Their Families

## EVENT OVERVIEW



April 19 & 20, 2017 – Phoenix, Arizona

# Special thanks to our 2017 Symposium Event Sponsors!



## TITLE SPONSORS



## PRESENTING SPONSORS



Special thanks to the Governor's Office of Youth, Faith and Family for their continued partnership in building support for all who serve and their families.

# Special thanks to our 2017 Symposium Event Sponsors!

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The Symposium opened with the posting of the colors by the **Arizona Air National Guard 161<sup>st</sup> Air Wing Color Guard**, accompanied by the **Phoenix Pipe Band**. The national anthem was sung by **Garland Miller of Military OneSource** and the invocation was given by **CH (MAJ) Bradley Walgren of the Arizona National Guard**.

*“This is an awesome environment for learning.”*

*“This event is always an annual highlight for me and many of my colleagues!”*

Our day two opening session began with the national anthem performed by **Evan Pittman**, son of APS Director of External Communications **Rear Admiral (ret.) Hal Pittman**.





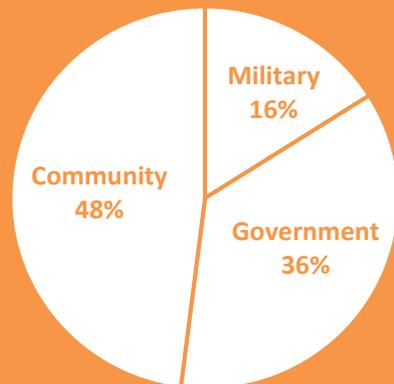
The 2017 Symposium was our 8<sup>th</sup> annual event.

Over **600** representatives of military, government and community organizations participated.

Thanks to the support of our **Symposium sponsors**, we were able to provide scholarships to **over 100 participants and volunteers** who would not otherwise have been able to attend the event or who traveled from other parts of the state to participate.

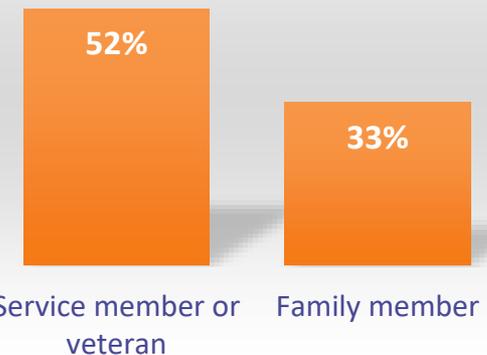
*“It keeps getting better every year.  
Keep up the good work!”*

## ATTENDEES BY SECTOR



The estimated collective reach of Symposium attendees is almost **19,000** service members, veterans and family members per week.

## ATTENDEES BY AFFILIATION





At the opening session on day one, **Senator John McCain** addressed the attendees, sharing some of his perspectives on the current state of affairs and also recognizing the great work being done by all of the participating organizations in support of our military, veteran and family population.

He also provided some background on his office's efforts to designate Arizona as a pilot program for the federal Clay Hunt for Suicide Prevention for American Veterans Act, resulting in the launch that day of our Be Connected program.

*“Thank you for an outstanding conference!”*

*“I have so many more resources now to assist my veterans.”*

**Thomas Winkel**, Director of the Arizona Coalition for Military Families, and **Colonel (ret.) Wanda Wright**, Director of the Arizona Department of Veterans' Services, with Senator John McCain.





*“Amazing,  
inspirational  
speakers!”*



On day two we were fortunate to welcome **Brad Snyder**, a US Navy Veteran and US Paralympian. His keynote address was presented by **Arizona Public Service**.

**APS Chairman and CEO Don Brandt** introduced Brad, who shared his inspiring story of military service, injury, recovery and achievement at the Paralympics.





Arizona Department of Veteran's Services (ADVS) Director **Wanda Wright** introduces Arizona's **Be Connected** program. This program is Arizona's Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention Act pilot program and includes three components:

- 1) **CALL** – 24/7 support line available to all service members, veterans, family members, helpers and providers.
- 2) **MATCH** – Specialized resource matching and navigation tools.
- 3) **LEARN** – Online and in-person training so everyone feels equipped to help.

[www.BeConnectedAZ.org](http://www.BeConnectedAZ.org)

Part of the general sessions were dedicated to launching key initiatives as part of Arizona's statewide plan to create an ecosystem of support for all service members, veterans, their families & communities.

*“This symposium has provided a platform to implement amazing initiatives and opportunities in my community.”*

Arizona Coalition for Military Families (ACMF) Director **Thomas Winkel** introduces the **Arizona Corporate Council on Veteran Careers**, which was developed through the leadership of APS and USAA, in partnership with ADVS & ACMF.



[www.ArizonaCoalition.org](http://www.ArizonaCoalition.org)

This year the Symposium included **9** tracks over two days with **36** different breakout sessions and over **100** presenters and panelists. Continuing education units were provided for several different disciplines.

**SYMPOSIUM TRACKS:**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
|  Veterans in the Workforce      |  Military/Veteran in AZ                                     |
|  Basic Needs, Benefits & Beyond |  Family Matters   |
|  Veterans in Higher Education   |  Legal, Vet Courts & Incarcerated Veterans                  |
|  Women Veterans                 |  Clinical Practice & Skills – Mental Health & Substance Use |
|  Faith & Spirituality           |  |



*“All the sessions I attended were great!”*

*“The topics were current and relevant.”*

*“Every session had something I could take away.”*

*“The presenters were very passionate.”*

*“Excellent sessions on how services for our veterans are improving and expanding!”*

*“Thank you for this incredible opportunity. I have learned so much and all sessions have been pivotal toward my future path, training, enjoyment and community service.”*



One of the breakouts was an experiential session focused on the military lifecycle. Participants experienced a slice of military life and gained a deeper understanding of what service members and veterans have been through. This is a mini version of a Military Immersion Training conducted by the Arizona Coalition for Military Families.

*“I’m a new Army mom and appreciate the small taste of what my son has experienced.”*

*“This session gave me deeper empathy for serving veterans and much more appreciation of the sacrifices made for our freedom.”*

*“I feel better asking about a military member’s experiences.”*

*“Great experience!”*

*“Helps me better understand what my clients have been through.”*



Participants learned about terrain and land navigation techniques (above). The Symposium platoon and cadre (below).





This year's event included an art gallery of works by service members, veterans & family members in our community, as well as a military memorabilia display.

*“The connections I made were really valuable.”*

45 military, government and community organizations exhibited at the Symposium, with time during breaks and lunch for networking and information sharing.



*“I learned new questions to ask & new awareness of programs available.”*





Attendee surveys **rated the Symposium at 4.75/5.0** and **99%** indicated they would likely attend a similar event in the future and would potentially recommend the Symposium to a colleague.

*“This symposium has given me a new zest for helping veterans and our military population.”*

*“I thought the entire Symposium was fantastic, and I am looking forward to attending again.”*

*“The people were wonderful and the information superb!”*

*“It truly opened my heart and mind to be more aware and compassionate.”*

*“The effort and hard work to put this event together was very professional and welcoming to the attendee.”*



Special thanks to our Symposium planning team and partners!

Arizona Coalition for Military Families  
Arizona Department of Economic Security  
Arizona Department of Veterans' Services  
Governor's Council on Spinal and Head Injuries  
Greater Valley Area Health Education Center  
University of Arizona James E. Rogers College of Law  
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Join us again next year for the  
9<sup>th</sup> annual Statewide Symposium!

April 18 & 19, 2018 – Phoenix, Arizona