

Pinal

NUGGET

Summer 2019

FREE

Honoring
Those Who
Served,
pages 10-12

A Copper
Corridor
Connection in
Hawaii,
pages 8-9

Photo by Jennifer R. Carnes

**A CENTURY
OF THE
AMERICAN LEGION**

pages 2-6

A community publication of Copperarea.com



PARADE

Members of the American Legion often serve as Color Guard for parades.

NUGGET

Covering the Copper Corridor Communities of Globe, Miami, Superior, Kearny, Hayden, Winkelman, Dudleyville, Aravaipa, Mammoth, San Manuel, Oracle, SaddleBrooke and Catalina.

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American Legion Heroes of the Copper Corridor

John Hernandez
Pinal Nugget

The American Legion is a wartime veterans’ organization which supports service to veterans, service members and community. They have been influential in securing many benefits for veterans, influenced social change and provided many programs for children and youth.

The American Legion was formed in 1919 by members of the American Expeditionary Forces who had fought in World War I. Membership quickly grew as many veterans in communities across the nation joined.

In Arizona, American Legion posts were established including a number along the area we know as the Copper Corridor. In its early years, it was customary to name a post after a local service member who had been killed in action. In 1919 the communities in

the Copper Corridor that established posts were: Ray, Hayden, Superior, Globe and Miami.

The town of Ray established the John H. Pruitt Unit #18. United States Marine Corporal, John H. Pruitt, died in France at Blanc Mont Ridge, Oct. 4, 1918. In 1919 he was awarded the Medal of Honor posthumously. The *Tucson Daily Star* reported: “According to the official citation, Pruitt attacked single handed two German machine guns which were spraying the

American troops with a hail of lead. He silenced both, killing their operators. Continuing, he raided a German dugout, capturing 40 of the enemy." The following day, Pruitt was killed in action.

Pruitt's mother, Belle Pruitt, accepted the medal. In 1920, a Navy cruiser ship was named for John H. Pruitt. His parents attended the christening in Maine.

There was some controversy about the Ray post taking the name of John Pruitt as it was known that the Pruitt family lived in Alhambra and Phoenix where John grew up and the newspapers had been calling Pruitt a Maricopa County resident. The Ray post Adjutant, Orion M. Zink, wrote a letter to the *Arizona Republic* which said that John Pruitt had enlisted in Ray and was considered a Pinal boy. It was also known that Pruitt had been living in Kelvin in 1916.

The first group of officers for the John H. Pruitt, Ray American Legion Post #18 were: A.P. Maygar, Post Commander; S.E. Stretton, Vice-Commander; Miss Josephine Cunningham, Treasurer; and Orion M. Zink, Adjutant.

Following World War II, the town of Sonora, what started out as the Mexican section of Ray (Ray-Sonora), established a post which was known as a Spanish-American chapter of the Legion. The Sonora American Legion Post #69 received its charter in May 1947. It then became known as the Amador-Larini post. It was named for two men from Sonora who were killed in World War II, Louis L. Amador and Manuel H. Larini.

Louis Amador lost his life while serving as a B-24 aerial gunner during a bombing mission. Staff Sergeant Amador posthumously

received the Air Medal with two oak clusters "for exceptionally meritorious achievement while participating in 10 separate bomber missions and for meritorious achievement in the destruction of one enemy airplane while serving as crewman in a bombardment mission over enemy-occupied Continental Europe." His father, Auralio Amador, of Sonora accepted the medal from Colonel M.M. Munn, Commander of Davis-Monthan Field. Louis' mother and two younger brothers were present during the ceremony.

Staff Sergeant Manuel H. Larini was killed in action in France June 6, 1944 during the landing operations of D-Day. He was 19 years old. He left Ray High School to enlist in the Air Corps in 1943. He was stationed in England and had completed many bombing missions

and had been awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. He was survived by his mother Lupe H. Gomez, his stepfather Salvador Gomez and three sisters, Esther, Eva and Emma Larini.

The first group of officers for the Amador-Larini post were: Lawrence Cittadini, Commander; Fred Flores, Adjutant; Joe Duarte, Finance Officer; Luis Mesques, Sergeant at Arms; and Eulalio Acevez, Chaplain. In 1965 the town of Ray Sonora was destroyed by the Kennecott Copper Corporation to expand its open pit mine. The Legion posts were temporarily put on hold. The John H. Pruitt post would be re-established in the new town of Kearny. In 1968 the Sonora American Legion would merge with the Kearny post and become known as the John H. Pruitt & Amador-Larini Post (P.A.L. Post #18).

In October 1919, the

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DEDICATION

A color guard and 21-gun salute was provided by the American Legion for the dedication of the new Vietnam Memorial in San Manuel this past Memorial Day.

American Legion Centennial

On Sept. 16, 1919, the United States Congress chartered the American Legion as a patriotic veterans' organization. The organization was conceived by a group of World War I veterans determined to make a difference.

Many posts were formed earlier in the year, around the country. The American Legion has evolved into one of the most influential non-profit groups in the United States with over two million members and 13,000 posts worldwide. The focus of their mission has centered on service to veterans, service members and community.

Since its beginnings, the Legion has won many benefits for veterans, influenced positive social changes and

produced many important programs for children and youth. Some of its important contributions and achievements include:

- The creation of the U.S. Veterans Bureau which would later become the Veterans Administration
- The creation of the American Legion baseball program
- The signing of the original G.I. Bill by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1944, which allowed millions of

Continued on page 6

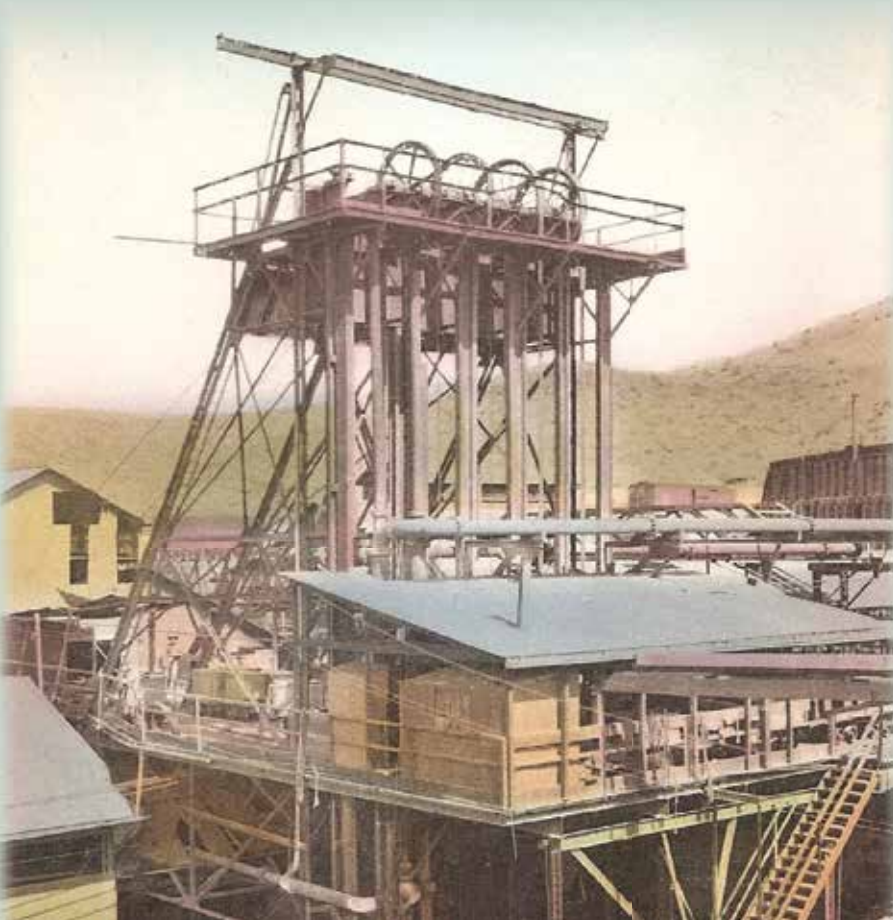
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Heroes

Continued from page 3

Hayden American Legion Post #22 was established. It would be named for Norman E. Griffin, who was killed in France while operating a tank machine gun advancing towards some German machine gun nests. A German shell blew off the top of the tank as well as Norman's head as reported by newspapers. The tank driver survived.

The Norman E. Griffin post boasted that 100 percent of veterans in the Hayden area had joined. The Ray Consolidated Copper Company had donated \$100 to the support of the post. Dues were \$5 per year. The first group of officers for the post were: H.R. Christie, Commander; L.J. Reinhardt, Secretary; and George H. Parsons, Treasurer.

In the summer of 1919, the Kern American Legion Post #17 was formed in Superior. It was named for William P. Kern. Private William Kern, while serving with the 109th Infantry, was fatally wounded in June 1918 during action in the Aisne offensive in France.

He had been reported missing in action until July 1919, when his parents received the news of his death.

On Nov. 11, 1919, the Kern Post sponsored an Armistice Day (now known as Veterans Day) ball at the Magma Club. All Superior's veterans were there, as Magma Copper had given the evening shift veterans the day off with pay.

The American Legion Post in Globe was organized in July 1919. It was named the Henry Berry Globe Post #4. According to the *Bisbee Daily Review*, "Henry Berry was one of the first Globe boys killed in action on the battlefields of France and the World War veterans of this city felt that his name should be honored in those who returned. Henry Berry was the son of J.H. Berry a well-known resident of this city."

The officers of the new post were Post Commander, M.F. Murphy; Vice-Commander, Ed Chilson; Executive Committee: C.C. Faires, Jack Low and Dr. Wales.

In Miami, the Harrington-Gray Miami Post #5 was also established in July 1919. It was named for Parmer

Harrington and Bertram Gray. Harrington was killed in action in December 1918. Gray had enlisted in July 1917 and was reported to have died in December 1918.

American Legion membership peaked following World War II. In the 1990s it began to dwindle. Legion halls have closed around the country. In small town Arizona, some posts have closed down while others that once had their own American Legion halls, now meet in public facilities. Two American Legion posts that are no longer shown as being active are the Miami and Hayden posts. A post in San Manuel which was established in the 1950s is no longer active. The Kearny and Superior posts now meet in public venues. The Globe Henry Berry Post #4 is still active and has its own clubhouse on Broad Street. These active posts are 100 years old this year. They continue to work for veterans and give to their communities as well as keep the memory alive of some of the brave soldiers that have given their lives for their country.



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Centennial

Continued from page 3

veterans to go to school, get better jobs and buy houses

- Helped launch the National Association of Mental Health with a large monetary contribution
- Fighting for accountability of Vietnam POWs and MIAs
- Donated \$1 million to the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial Fund for construction of the Wall in Washington D.C.
- Filed suit against the United States government to force them to conduct studies of the effects of Agent Orange on Vietnam Veterans.

The American Legion continues to advocate for veterans' benefits,

promote youth programs and support communities throughout the country. In 1917, history was made when Denise H. Rohan was elected National Commander of the American Legion, the first woman to hold the position. In 1919, a number of towns along the Copper Corridor established American Legion posts. These were Hayden, Superior, Ray, Globe and Miami. Only the Superior, Kearny, and Globe posts are still active. The Kearny post is the Ray post which was forced to move when the town of Ray was demolished. Congratulations, American Legion, on your Centennial and thanks for all you have done for veterans and your communities!



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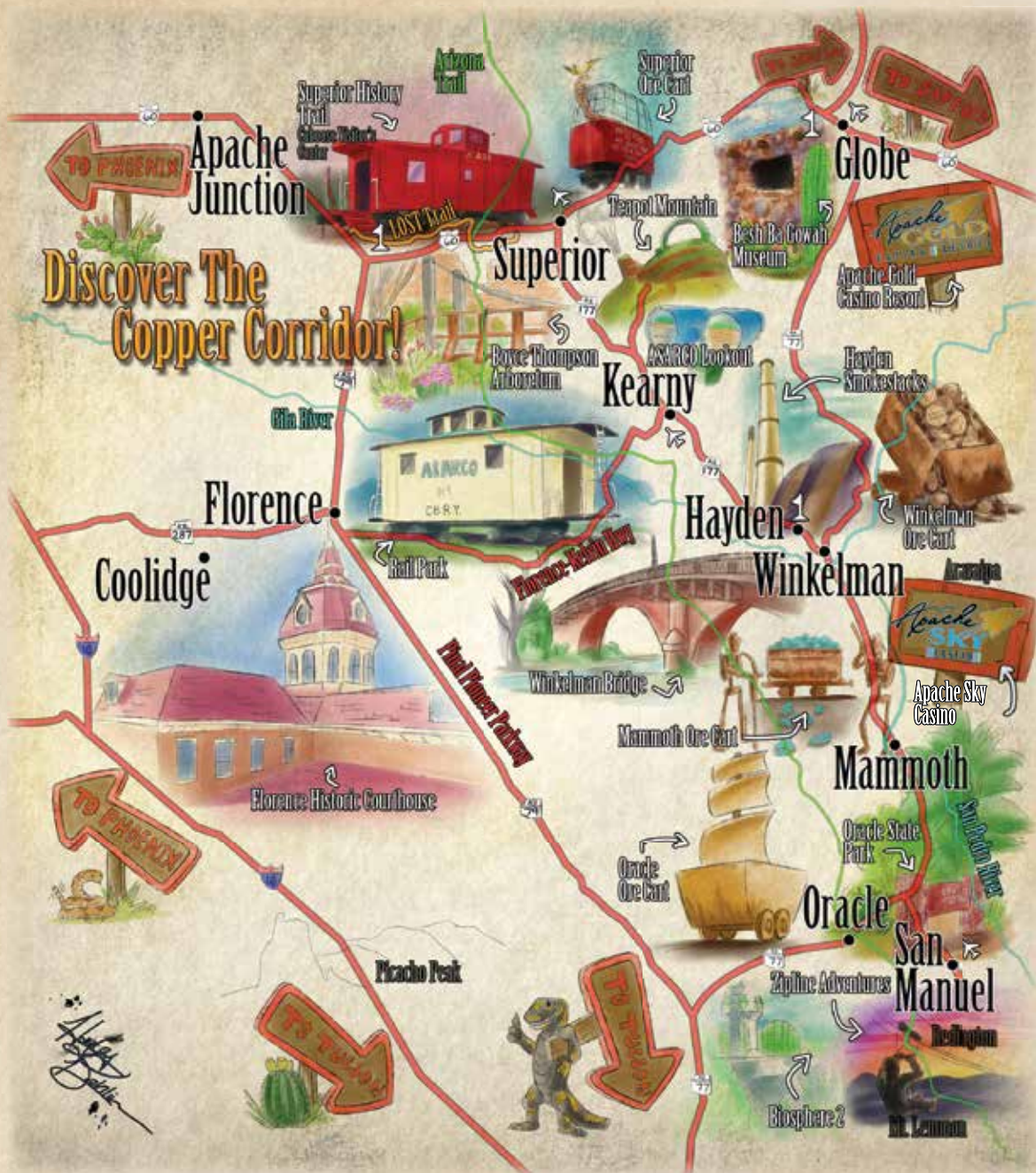
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A Memorial Day Story

– Tony Arriaga

While researching some information on one of the seven men from the Tri-Community who were killed in Vietnam, I came across the obituary of Tony Arriaga in a Hawaii newspaper.

John Hernandez
Pinal Nugget



GRAVESITE

Tony Arriaga's grave in Hawaii.

It listed his surviving family members, his wife and three kids as well as his family members in Arizona. It also listed where he was to be buried, which was the National Cemetery of the Pacific more commonly known in Hawaii as the Punchbowl cemetery. Punchbowl is located in an extinct bowl shaped volcanic crater.

As I was also planning a trip to Hawaii for a family vacation, I made it a point to add the cemetery as one of the places I would visit and I would find Tony's grave to pay my respects. Punchbowl would not be that far from where I was staying in Honolulu and I had always wanted to visit the site. I was also staying near an area known as Kapolei which is close to the town of Waipahu which was listed as the last place Tony

lived with his family. I decided to search for family members so I could visit and deliver some of the post cards of the new Memorial to the Vietnam 7, men from the Tri-Community who gave their lives during the war. I wanted to tell the family that Tony was still remembered in the Tri-Community and was being honored.

At first the search was futile. A few days before I was to leave for Hawaii, I came across an obituary of a Tony Arriaga who lived on the island of Maui and died in March of this year. Some of the surviving family members had matching names of some of Tony Arriaga's family. Was this one of Tony's sons? I saw the name of Manuel Arriaga, Tony's brother and began an internet search for him on Maui

and came across a Manuel who was managing an independent living home for seniors which I found was down the street from the condo where I would be staying in Kihei, Maui.

On my fourth day on Maui, I drove to Kalama Heights, an Independent Retirement Living complex less than a mile from where I was staying. The man who greeted me was Manuel Arriaga. I asked him if his father was Tony Arriaga who was killed in Vietnam in 1966. He was somewhat taken aback at the question but answered yes. I introduced myself and told him I was a reporter from the area where his father had lived in Arizona and about the memorial listing his father as one of seven local men killed in Vietnam that would be dedicated on Memorial Day in San



Manuel.

Manuel invited me into his office and we spoke for a while. Like his father, Manuel had served in the Army. He told me that his father's death had been very hard on his mother as well as the kids. His mother, Audrey had been pregnant and gave birth to a daughter, Jacqueline, shortly after Tony's death. Audrey was left with four kids and living on a military pension. She later remarried and had other children and is now living in Louisiana. One of Tony's daughters lives on Maui and one in Oklahoma. Manuel told me about his brother Tony recently passing away after what was supposed to be a routine heart surgery.

Manuel was three years old when his father died. He said he and Tony had been trying to find out more about their father. They know very little and his family had little or no contact with Tony's Arizona family. I told him about a cousin who was trying to find out more about his family and gave him her

contact information. He gave me his contact information and I told him I would try to find out more information about his dad and provide his contact info to Tony's family living in the Tri-Community. I gave him two sets of the San Manuel Memorial post cards and told him that I was going to visit his father's grave on Memorial Day.

Manuel told me a story, that about 20 years ago, he received a phone call out of the blue from a member of his father's platoon. The man told him that he had been there the day his father was killed. He said that they had come upon a Vietnamese tunnel and that it was his turn to go into the tunnel. The young private said he was scared, too scared to go in. Manuel's father was a Sergeant and could have forced the issue and ordered him to go and clear the tunnel but instead Tony took his place and went in. It was in that dark tunnel that Tony was killed. The man who had called had to live with that regret his whole life.

⬆️ CEMETERY

National Cemetery of the Pacific on Oahu overlooks the city of Honolulu.

On Memorial Day, I visited the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific. It was an awesome site to see all the American flags on the grounds, each representing someone who had been killed in a war, served in the military or eligible family members. Over 35,000 are interred at the cemetery. Each Memorial Day, volunteers in Hawaii make sure that a lei and an American flag is placed on each grave.

As you walk on the grounds, you will come upon the graves of Medal of Honor recipients, former U.S. Senators and Representatives, Governors, men killed during the Pearl Harbor attack, and even the graves of

Continued on page 14



SOME GAVE ALL

This memorial was erected at the entrance to San Manuel, AZ, in memory of its sons who gave their lives.

Vietnam 7 Honored With San Manuel Memorial

They were sons. Brothers. Uncles. Friends. Boys, really. They grew up playing in the streets of San Manuel, Oracle, Mammoth and Tiger. They were athletes, students, classmates.

And when their country called for their service, they didn't hesitate. They left their homes and their families behind and were sent to the front lines in Vietnam.

Norman Wayne Garrett, June 23, 1942 – February 15, 1965. Pvt. E-2, Army. Died from hostile artillery, rocket or mortar, South Vietnam.

Tony R. Arriaga, October 7, 1938 – May 6, 1966. Sgt. E-5, Army. Died gun, small arms fire, South Vietnam.

Mark Andrew Bateman, May 3, 1947 – October 3, 1967. Corporal, Army. Died from multiple fragmentation wounds, Dinh Tuong, South Vietnam.

Juan Manuel Garcia, December 27, 1948 – November 20, 1967. PFC, Army. Died from multiple fragmentation wounds, Kontum, South Vietnam.

Allen Wade Ingram, December 12, 1949 – September 24, 1968. Lance Corporal, Marine Corps. Died from gun small arms fire Quang Tri, South Vietnam.

Gary Everett Graves, April 10, 1948 – November 11, 1968. TM3 – E4, Navy. Died from other explosive device (river mine), Quang Tri, South Vietnam.

Arthur Martinez Garcia Jr. – April 15, 1947 – February 7, 1970. Sgt., Marine

Corps. Died from gun small arms fire, Thua Thien, South Vietnam.

“The Marines were tough guys over there,” Oracle resident and Veteran Darrell Klesch said when speaking about his friend Allen Ingram. “They had it tough.”

The Marines were deployed for 13 months at a time. Klesch, who was drafted into the Army, said that his deployment was for 12 months. He said he was heartbroken over his friend's enlistment in the Marines. Allen enlisted while still in high school. Klesch, who was a few years older, was drafted and arrived in Vietnam just two weeks before Allen was killed.

“Allen was killed in his 13th month,” Klesch said. Klesch sent Allen a letter shortly after his arrival in country promising that he would find him. The letter was returned to him unopened.

While it was hard on him, it was devastating to Allen's parents, Klesch said.

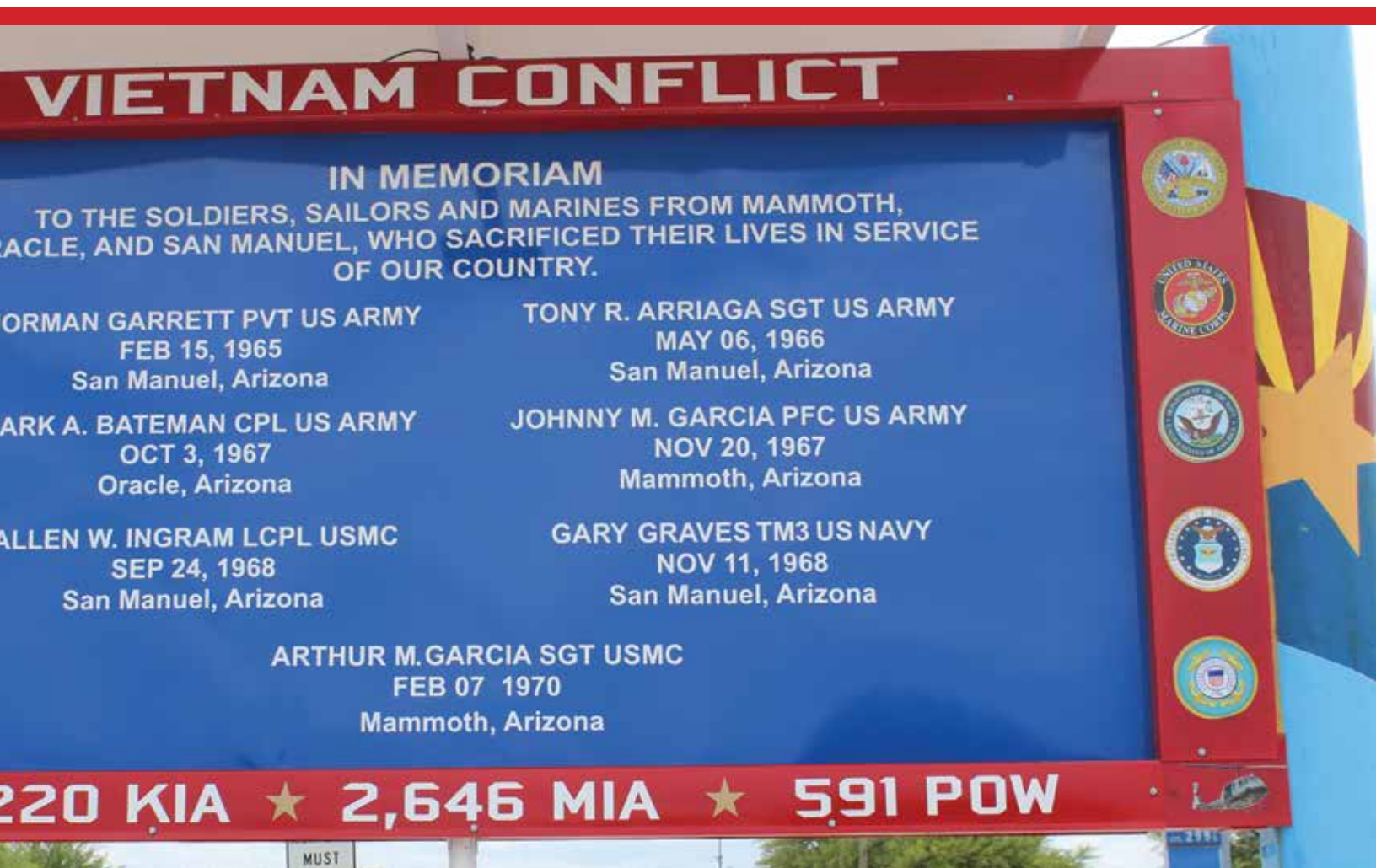
“From that moment on, their whole world fell apart. Allen was their only son,” Klesch said. “The sun set and went down in their hearts for Allen.”

Allen was a little more than two months shy of his 19th birthday.

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From that moment on, their whole world fell apart.



NORMAN GARRETT



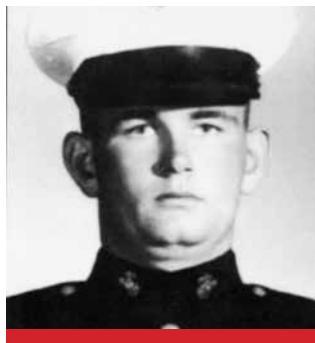
TONY ARRIAGA



MARK BATEMAN



JUAN GARCIA



ALLEN INGRAM



GARY GRAVES



ARTHUR GARCIA JR.

Memorial

Continued from page 10

Fifty-three years ago, May 6, 1966, Tony Arriaga was killed in action in South Vietnam. The *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* newspaper reported that while on a “search and destroy” mission against the Viet Cong, Arriaga was shot in the head. He was buried on May 16, 1966 at the National Cemetery of the Pacific on the island of Oahu overlooking Honolulu.

Tony was born in Jerome, Arizona and lived in the Tri-Community in Tiger, San Manuel and Oracle. He is one of seven Tri-Community men who were killed in the Vietnam

War and now honored on the new Vietnam Memorial Billboard on the San Manuel Veterans Memorial Blvd. (State Highway 76) near the entrance of San Manuel. Tony had been left off an earlier memorial plaque at San Manuel High School because he had not graduated. Thanks to members of the San Manuel High School Class of 1968 who lobbied for his inclusion and paid for his name to be engraved on the plaque, his name has been added and the plaque is now located at the entrance inside of the school gym.

The memorial to the young men who gave their lives for our freedom was dedicated on Memorial Day, Monday, May 27, 2019. The dedication

included a color guard and 21-gun salute. It included beautiful renditions of the National Anthem and America the Beautiful, performed by Julia Egginaman. The keynote speaker was Command Sgt. Paul Belanger (retired), a 1969 graduate of San Manuel High School. Special recognition was given to the Gold Medal families in attendance. Also recognized were the veterans in attendance.

The memorial workers who volunteered their time, donated materials and worked hard to see this memorial project completed are:

- Eddie Bonner – sheet metal fabrication, consultation and design
- Ron Wood, First Class Construction and Remodeling, LLC – construction, consultation and design (520) 405-8962
- Mike Dedrick and Phil Bonner – Assisted in sheet metal work
- Frank Martinez – pole preparation and design
- Deborah (Large) Foster and Connie (Sams) – Artists who painted the American and Arizona flags on the poles
- Hoss Foster – flag template preparation
- Billy Haro – pole preparation
- Deanna Haro – wood treatment
- Bill Haro – design, consultation and coordinator
- Santiago Telles – medal consultant
- Bruce McDade – hardware and metal
- Richard and Mark Beal, North American Powder Coating and Sandblasting (520) 622-5640 – consultation design and powder coating
- Steve and Brad Welch, Sherry Tilton, Graphic Design and Printing Monster • Signs (520) 790-6400 – consultation, design and printing



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Tony Arriaga

Continued from page 9

unknown soldiers. There were a number of graves of Americans of Japanese descent who served during World War II in the famed all Nisei (2nd generation Japanese-Americans) 442nd Regimental Combat Team. The monuments and visitors center at Punchbowl not only honor our Veterans but provide a history lesson of our country's wars. There is also a fantastic view of Honolulu and Diamond Head from the crater's high points.

I was able to find Tony Arriaga's grave thanks to a map provided by the cemetery. The cemetery is broken down by sections alphabetically and each grave has a number. Tony's grave is located in Section W Site

156. I placed a set of the Vietnam 7 Memorial post cards on Tony's grave and paid my respects. May he rest in peace.

The Hawaiian name for the Punchbowl cemetery is "Puowaina". It has historical and religious significance for the ancient Hawaiians. The most common translation of Puowaina is "Hill of Sacrifice".

Author's Note: If anyone remembers Tony Arriaga growing up and would like to share some information about him or a photograph, please contact John Hernandez at johnh@minersunbasin.com or 520-896-9019 so he can pass the stories on to Tony's son Manuel and the family.

⬆️ A SOLDIER'S SON

Manuel Arriaga was just a toddler when his father was killed in Vietnam.



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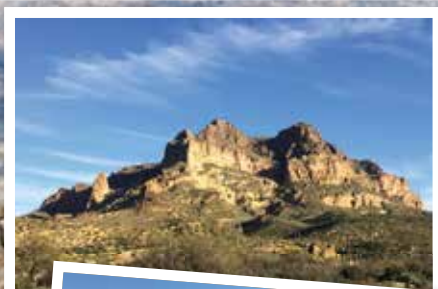
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Vietnam Veterans Reunite in Mammoth

John Hernandez
Pinal Nugget



BROTHERS IN ARMS

Craig Johnson, Tony Paulsen and Juan Ramirez Jr. served together during the Vietnam War. They recently reunited in Mammoth.



Juan Ramirez Jr. has lived in Mammoth since 1972. He worked for Magma Copper Company for 29 years at the refinery. He grew up in Santa Barbara, California.

Juan is a Vietnam Veteran, having served in the Army with the 1st Battalion, 46th Infantry, Bravo Company in landing zones near Chu Lai, South Vietnam from early 1969 to 1970.

On May 4, 2019, two of his fellow Vietnam Vets who served with him met at his home in Mammoth.

Tony Paulsen was a Lieutenant and Juan's platoon leader. They had not seen each other since May of 1970 in Vietnam. Craig Johnson was another member

of their platoon. He was able to meet with Juan a few years ago. They were able to find each other through use of the internet. Juan's son Enrique became interested in finding out about his dad's Vietnam experiences after researching the service of his mother's step-brothers, Art and Johnny Garcia. Art and Johnny were brothers who grew up in Mammoth and were both killed in Vietnam. They are buried in Mammoth.

Enrique was able to contact Craig

and he responded to him with information and some photos of Juan and said he wanted to meet with Juan. They met together in Oro Valley two years ago along with another platoon member and friend, Jim Olander from Bisbee, Arizona. Craig attends the annual reunion of the 1/46 Bravo Company held in different parts of the country and was able to get in contact with Tony. Craig, Tony and Juan spent the day together at Juan's with their wives. They

also had lunch at La Casita in Mammoth. Jim was unable to make it.

At Juan’s home, the three men sat with their wives and Enrique and started telling stories from their time in Vietnam. Some of the stories were funny and many were sad. Juan told a story of one of their men who was walking in front of him being killed instantly when he tripped a claymore mine. Juan doesn’t know how he was not killed or wounded when the mine exploded. He also talked about seeing men who were wounded and had lost limbs being placed in a helicopter for medical evacuation and watching soldiers toss the limbs into the chopper with the wounded.

They talked about the leeches, bugs and snakes they encountered. One time while on patrol they came upon a huge python. They said that the head of the snake was

wider than the machete they were using to cut through the trail. They estimated that it was 30 feet long. One of the platoon members who carried a silencer for his gun was called up and shot it. Craig told a story about a tiger that walked into their camp one day. They were all so startled by this huge, magnificent creature that no one thought about shooting it. It strolled through their camp back into the jungle.

“The people were small but the bugs, snakes and animals were large,” Juan said.

Juan shared a story about a firefight where the platoon had virtually run out of ammunition. Their Captain ordered them to fix bayonets! None of the men in the platoon carried a bayonet with them.

“It’s funny to think about it now but it wasn’t then,” he said.

Continued on page 18



A YOUNG JUAN

A photo of Juan Ramirez Jr. taken during the Vietnam War.



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Reunion

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They all talked proudly about Bravo Company and the men they served with.

“I had a good platoon,” said Tony. “There were a lot of places we got hit hard. They kept me safe.” Tony added, “Vietnam was pain, agony, dirt and mud. You don’t think about it when you’re young.”

Juan and Craig would be wounded in combat. They both received Purple Hearts. Craig was also awarded a Bronze Star. Tony although never wounded had a few close calls. Once after a firefight, he had seven bullet holes in his clothing. One time

an enemy grenade landed between his legs. It did not explode! Tony received three Bronze Stars for valor. On Dec. 12, 1969, they were witness to some acts of courage, sacrifice and survival that was later turned in to an award winning documentary film, *Vietnam War Miracle*.

Author’s note: While listening to their remembrances, you could feel the bond they shared as men that have experienced war together. It was an honor for me to have shared part of their day and some of those experiences with me. Thank you for your service, Juan, Craig and Tony.

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