



ABOVE AND BEYOND

ARIZONA AND THE MEDAL OF HONOR

An exhibit presented by the Arizona Historical Society and Sharlot Hall Museum that honors Arizona's history with the nation's highest military decoration.

About the Exhibit

The centerpieces are items related to many of the heroes depicted in this exhibit, including four actual Medals of Honor earned by a diverse mix of military service members, either in actions conducted in Arizona or by our state's native sons at war abroad.

One of these, incredibly, was buried under a layer of dirt and discovered by chance by a modern day treasure hunter with his metal detector. The story of its recipient remains almost completely unknown.

Supporting the medals are graphically-rich displays, multimedia presentations and other historic artifacts which tell stories of service and heroism from the days of the Arizona Territory through Vietnam.

Two very special guests – Col. J.R. Vargas and Col. Fred Ferguson, both Medal of Honor recipients, and the family of Manuel "The Arizona Kid" Mendoza, whose Medal of Honor was presented posthumously last month at the White House – will join in a special ceremony and reception on May 17, 2014 – Armed Forces Day.

That reception marks the official opening of the exhibit at the Arizona Historical Society (AHS) Museum in Tempe. After six months there, it will then travel for the next two and a half years to AHS museums at Tucson, Yuma and Flagstaff, and to the Sharlot Hall Museum in Prescott in six month intervals.

The AHS hopes to attract more than 100,000 people to see the exhibit as it travels around Arizona.

About Arizona and the Medal of Honor

Although it is filled with iconic names like Geronimo, Cochise and Frank Luke, Jr., few people know the history of the Medal of Honor in Arizona.

The earliest action that ever resulted in the award of a Medal of Honor occurred in Arizona in 1861, when Dr. Bernard Irwin led troops to rescue comrades engaged in a fierce fight with Cochise and his warriors.

Between 1862 and 1889, some 157 United States Army officers and enlisted men earned the nation's highest military decoration for actions that took place in Arizona.

Since then, these Medal of Honor recipients have been joined by four of Arizona's native sons.