



# UNIFIED ARIZONA VETERANS

## COPPER STAR/BUCKY O'NEILL AWARD



### NOMINATION INSTRUCTIONS & FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**PURPOSE:** In 2013, the UAV created the Bucky O'Neill Arizona Veterans Award to recognize and honor the efforts and achievements made by public departments, agencies or organizations and those public servants or elected officials who consistently provide exemplary service to the military veterans and/or their families who reside in the State of Arizona.

**ELIGIBILITY:** The UAV may present this award to any local, county, or State of Arizona governmental agency, or to a single elected official, current or to a past member of said institutions, excluding members of the State Legislature. The nominee must be or have served as 1: An elected official of any local, county, or State of Arizona government other than as a State Senator or Representative of Arizona, or 2: be a local, county, or State of Arizona agency or employee thereof.

**CRITERIA:** The following criteria are requisites to a Nomination.

**Evaluation Scope:** Evaluations will focus upon the scope and impact of a nominee's achievements and the extent to which their efforts, of the efforts of the agency, benefit military veterans and/or military veteran's families.

**Online Nominations:** All UAV Copper Awards are to be submitted through the Nomination Form found in the Nominations and Scholarships on the UAV website.

**Validation:** Nominators are required to ensure accuracy of the information submitted, and will confirm validation of data by their signature on the Nominator's Checklist.

**Nominee's Advocacy Contributions:** Summarize the contributions and recognition of the nominee in relation to veterans' advocacy or veterans' support programs or initiatives. (Examples may include the nominee's active involvement with veterans' organizations.)

**Letters of Recommendation:** Letters should be from people not immediately related to the nominee.



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**AWARDS COMMITTEE:** Nominations for the Copper Shield and the Bucky O'Neill award will be reviewed by a single committee of veterans selected from Arizona's recognized veterans' service organizations and appointed by the Chairperson of the UAV. At least one of the members of this committee shall be a member of the UAV Legislative Committee. The committee will be chaired by a serving member of the UAV Board of Directors or past chairperson of the UAV.

**APPROVAL AUTHORITY:** The final approval for this award is the UAV Board of Directors.

**SUBMISSION ADDRESS AND DATE:** Nominations may be submitted online for the 2026 Nomination Year, and will be considered during the next convening of the Awards Committee.

The Nominator's Checklist is available on the UAV website. In order for a Copper Award Nomination to proceed, the completed and signed Nominator's Checklist must be mailed, via United States Postal Service, to:

Unified Arizona Veterans, P. O. Box 34338, Phoenix, AZ 85067

ATTN: UAV Copper Awards

**QUESTIONS:** Questions regarding this operating instruction may be addressed to [chair@azuav.org](mailto:chair@azuav.org) or [secretary@azuav.org](mailto:secretary@azuav.org)



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**BACKGROUND:** William Owen “Bucky” O’Neill (February 2, 1860 – July 1, 1898) was an American soldier, the 14th Adjutant General of Arizona (1889-1891), a judge of Yavapai County, Arizona, a three term Yavapai County sheriff, a newspaper editor, started his own railroad company which would run from Williams, AZ to the Grand Canyon, a miner, gambler and lawyer, and in 1898 was elected as Mayor of Prescott, Arizona, serving briefly before stepping down to join the Teddy Roosevelt’s Rough Riders. His nickname came from his tendency to “buck the tiger” at faro or other card games. He was a Captain in Roosevelt’s Rough Riders, and died in battle shortly after evoking his now famous last words, ‘Sergeant, the Spanish bullet isn’t made that will kill me.’

Bucky O’Neill is buried in Arlington National Cemetery. On July 3, 1907, a monument by sculptor Solon Borglum (of Mount Rushmore fame) was dedicated to the memory of Bucky and the other Rough Riders in the County Courtyard of Prescott, Arizona.

**AWARD CEREMONY:** The Bucky O’Neill Arizona Veterans Award is the most revered of the awards presented by the UAV. This award may be presented at the annual Patriotic Gala hosted by the Arizona Veterans Hall of Fame Society (AVHOFS). The UAV partners with the AVHOFS in endeavors that complement and serve the Arizona military veteran communities and veterans’ service organizations.

**DESCRIPTION:** The Bucky O’Neill Award consists of a significantly sized metallic and copper colored statuette of a horseback rider mounted on a pedestal with an engraved inscription at the base displaying the UAV emblem suitably exhibited. The award embodies the concept that the award recipient’s exceptional service to our military veterans reflects the finest frontier spirit of our State’s early leaders.