

## OUR TUCSON HEROES

### One in three a vet at Splendido

HILLARY DAVIS  
*The Explorer*

**A**t Oro Valley's Splendido, the odds of running into a military veteran are pretty high.

Of the roughly 300 total residents at the retirement community, 107 are veterans. They come from all branches and their combat experience spans from World War II — 40 of the group from this war alone — to Desert Storm. That is, to say quite simply, a lot of diverse military leadership in one corner of the town.

And after more than 40 years in the Marine Corps, Charlie Carr still has some leading yet to do. Carr, a retired colonel who served from 1953 to 1994, is the chairman of the Splendido Veterans Committee, which organizes military-themed events at the community.

Carr was an aviator who flew A-6 Intruders in Vietnam and F-18 Hornets in Desert Storm—three tours

in Vietnam and, a couple of decades later, a stint in Saudi Arabia. He came to Arizona about three years ago from North Carolina, having learned about Splendido from a magazine for military officers.

It was here that he became neighbors with Army Gen. John Wickham, who suggested that Carr revitalize the veterans' group.

Wickham was chief of staff of the Army under President Ronald Reagan, making him, for a time, the senior-most uniformed member of the Department of the Army. The two men were from different branches, but Carr knew his response.

"I'm a colonel, he's a four-star general. Aye, aye, sir," he chuckled.

The eight-member committee Carr took on plans events for the Memorial Day and Veterans Day holidays, plus other programming: Guest speakers, such as Arizona Congresswoman and retired Air Force Col. Mar-

#### SPLENDIDO VETERANS

Army: 54  
Navy: 24  
Air Force: 14  
Marine Corps: 8  
Coast Guard: 2  
Nurse Corps 2  
Other countries: 3  
(1 each Swiss Army, British Army,  
UK Royal Air Force)

**Total:** 107 (99 men, 8 women)

tha McSally, who gave a talk about women in combat; social events like a Marine Corps Ball; and, working with Oro Valley's American Legion, a charity clothing drive for homeless veterans, which drew about 350 items of men's and women's clothing and shoes, plus 12 pairs of eyeglasses.

Carr said the veterans committee is a strong group and they keep busy with business, but occasionally a war story slips out.