



# PVAHCS VA Veterans Day Parade News Release

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## Giant Balloon Honoring WWI Nursing Corps Makes Debut In 2008 VA Veterans Day Parade Exactly 90 Years After the End of that War

**Purple Heart, Bald Eagle, Uncle Sam, "Rosie the Riveter" Also Soar over Crowd**

PHOENIX — With a theme of **"Serving With Honor,"** the 2008 VA Veterans Day Parade will honor all those who have served in the U.S. military during war, conflict and peacetime, with a special focus on veterans currently serving in Afghanistan and Iraq.

**The Phoenix VA Health Care System's Annual VA Veterans Day Parade will be held on Tuesday, Nov. 11, starting at 11 a.m.** One of the nation's premier Veterans Day parades with approximately 100 patriotic entries, the parade will showcase five giant helium balloons.

**Making its debut this year is a 45-foot tall balloon that depicts a member of the U.S. Army Nurse Corps during World War I.** The balloon pays tribute to the approximately 22,000 nurses who served during WWI, which ended exactly 90 years ago on November 11, 1918. It also honors the nearly 700 nurses currently employed at the Phoenix VA Health Care System.

More than 10,000 women served overseas as nurses during the war, which ended with a cease fire on Nov. 11, 1918, at 11 a.m. The date was known as Armistice Day, and eventually became a federal holiday. In 1954, the name of the holiday was changed from Armistice Day to Veterans Day, and parades are traditionally held across the United States beginning at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11 month of the year.



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*The Carl T. Hayden Veterans Affairs Medical Center, which is part of the Phoenix VA Health Care System, has been serving veterans in Maricopa County since 1951. We are a level one tertiary care facility that offers a variety of services to more than 67,000 veterans. We currently have 130 inpatient beds for medical and surgical patients, 80 beds for nursing home patients and 48 inpatient beds for mental health patients. We are honored to serve our veterans who have paid the price for us to enjoy our freedoms.*

## Giant Balloons Soar Over VA Veterans Day Parade 2-2-2-2-2-2

Balloon inflation begins at 8 a.m. on parade day, on the east side of VA Building 4. After the giant balloons are filled, each will be carefully guided along the parade route by teams of handlers from the Army and Air National Guard, navigating around overhead power lines, street signs and traffic lights.

In its second year in the parade, a **Purple Heart** balloon will pay tribute to those wounded or killed at the hands of the enemy during wartime. The giant balloon depicts in detail the Purple Heart medal, which was created by Gen. George Washington in 1782.

An **American bald eagle** balloon, with outspread wings spanning 35 feet, also will soar over the parade. The bald eagle, a species unique to North America, was chosen in 1782 as the emblem of the United States, serving as a symbol of freedom and perseverance for our nation. This will be the sixth year the eagle has flown in the VA Veterans Day Parade.

The American bald eagle will be joined by the **Uncle Sam** balloon. As a recruitment tool of the Armed Forces since World War I, Uncle Sam continues to inspire people to join all branches of the military in order to preserve and protect our freedom. The Uncle Sam balloon is 47 feet tall when inflated.

The 40-foot **Rosie the Riveter** balloon honors thousands of women who went to work on factory lines during World War II, while men were engaged in the war abroad. Government ads campaigning for women to join the workforce sparked the title "Rosie the Riveter." In countless conflicts, women have served stateside in the military or in civilian roles to support our country and our military.

The parade will take a zigzag route, heading North on 7th Street from Montecito to Camelback Road. It will turn west on Camelback and proceed to Central Avenue, and then turn north on Central to Montebello, just north of Bethany Home Road, where it will destage at the North Phoenix Baptist Church.

For more information, contact the VA Veterans Day Parade Coordinator and Public Affairs Officer for the Phoenix VA Health Care System, Paula Pedene, APR, at [paula.pedene@va.gov](mailto:paula.pedene@va.gov).

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