



"THE TRAIL BLAZER NEWS"

The Military Order of the World Wars -- MOWW
Colonel Billie L. Stephens Apache Trail Chapter 207
Serving Youth, Community and Nation for 32 Years

April & May 2022
Volume 32, Issue 4

Past Commander Comments/Editor

Pictured right: Region XIII/Dept. of AZ Commander LTC Patrick C. Stolze, Maj Lew White, ROTC/JROTC Program Chair & Jr. Vice Commander, Mrs. Diane McDowell at our 19 April 2022 Chapter luncheon. **Thanks to** our Guest Speaker, Mesa PD Officer Andrew Gonzalez, Special Operations—SWAT, read more on Page 2 this issue.



Congratulations! To LTC Patrick C. Stolze, Chapter Commander, **LTC David Lynch**, Senior Vice Commander & Treasurer & **LTC Chuck Erickson**, Junior Vice Commander, who were installed by **VCinC Lt Col Marlon Ruiz**, at our 17 May 2023 luncheon as New chapter leadership for 2022-2023. We appreciate your continued willingness to serve!

The AZ State Legislature, Hybrid Veterans Caucus led by Representatives Richard Andrade & Walter Blackman on 25 April 2022, had a presentation by **K9's for Warriors** CEO, Rory Diamond. **K9s For Warriors - Service Dogs for Disabled Veterans** "92% of veteran graduates report a reduction in medication." "82% of our veteran graduates report reduced suicide ideation." **K9's for Warriors** is the largest provider of service dogs for veterans. They rescue, train and provide service dogs to veterans suffering from PTSD & MST. Working to locate a facility in Phoenix, they have purchased facilities from **Heidi's Village—Animal shelter + Rescue + Safe Haven Pet Adoption | Heidi's Village (heidisvillage.org)** in Phoenix, setting up a campus to rescue dogs, train them & provide them to veterans in need here in Arizona. They are based out of Jacksonville, Florida, where our next annual MOWW conference will be held in August. **Thanks to everyone** for your positive energy & support. **For the Good of the Order:** MAJ Rosanne E. Trujillo, Editor

HOT TOPIC!

- ◆ 19 April 2022
Ofc. Andrew Gonzalez- Mesa PD lauded
- ◆ **Spring Awards 2022**
- ◆ **Region XIII- Scouting Update**
- ◆ **ASRS Update**



Public Safety; Law & Order Program
19 April 2022—Recap
Apache Trail Chapter Luncheon

Guest Speaker:

Officer Andrew Gonzalez
Special Operations—SWAT
Mesa Police Department
Operation Iraqi Freedom/Marine Corps

Officer Andrew Gonzalez spoke the first hour sans his Supervisor Sergeant Kyle Thomas, due to an on-going prostitution detail which demanded their time.

Officer Gonzalez Thanked members for the invitation to speak and shared his experiences resulting in his becoming a Mesa Police Officer. With humor and humility he made members laugh several times describing his path to law enforcement and the Marine Corps.

From LA, he joined the LAPD Police Explorers at age 16 learning radio codes, went on ride-alongs and saw his first dead body. Helping victims made a huge impact on him convincing him to go into law enforcement. His Dad, a great role model, began as a postal worker then he joined the LAPD at age 49, which further influenced him to join law enforcement. Ofc. Gonzalez after graduation from HS, joined the Marine Corps, went to Camp Pendleton for training and liked the “1st to Fight & strict” ethics of the MC.

In 2008 he ETSed (*Expiration of Term of Service*) planning to join either the Phoenix or LAPD. He had visited his sister in Avondale and liked it here. Phoenix PD told him all he needed was his DD214 when he got out the military. Then, both Phoenix & LAPD had a hiring freeze & the MC would not take him back. Not waiting around, he worked for two private security companies & no one was hiring. He used his GI Bill to attend the Gilbert Training Academy which enabled him to apply for PD jobs throughout the state. Eventually hired with Mesa PD, working patrol for 2 1/2 years then tested for SWAT.

Officer Gonzalez met his future wife working in Mesa PD, though advised not to date co-workers. Called to a scene of a homeless person, he was waiting for back-up thinking no one was coming. Then his back-up arrived: “She comes screeching around the corner down the alley, 5’ 7”, 150 pounds, blond & blue eyed.”

Continued Next Page

Public Safety; Law & Order Program—Continued

Officer Gonzalez tested for SWAT which he described as “intense.” Sent to SWAT school for eight straight days, which ran 0500 to 2100 hours with lots of physical activity & sleep deprivation. He then attended four days of hostage rescue. He has certifications in: pistols & rifles, explosive breaching and tasing. He volunteered for Rappelling Master Instructor and realized he had to tie a lot of knots (boring). When instructors then said he & others were responsible for tying chute knots for airborne human drops, he admitted he started taking it more seriously & listened.

Officer Gonzalez became a drone operator, which he stated work better then sending in robots & cameras under doors as they don't get stuck. He said training for drone operator was not as easy as it sounded. Asking members if anyone was a pilot, we had several in our audience. Officer Gonzalez then emphasized he related to them as he had to learn about weather, landings, air traffic control & do a lot of math. He thought all he would have to do with drone “is just fly.” He made members laugh when yes, he has destroyed a few propellers, arms and wings and has had to pay for some but not all of them. He is also very good at math.

Officer Gonzales likes the variety his job offers, enjoys new learning opportunities, and helping people. He further attends police recruiting events and gets to speak to fellow veterans encouraging them to join the Mesa PD. He speaks with LTC's, Commanders on active duty and they, thinking there is an age limit to join the PD, learn there is not.

Officer Gonzalez summarized by saying the Mesa PD SWAT is the 2nd largest in Arizona, the other full time SWAT's are Phoenix and DPS. He stated, SWAT works to protect under cover officers and arrest suspects. They are on standby every three weeks, 24/7, Monday through Sunday. They also help to protect dignitaries.

Officer Gonzalez was in the 3rd Bn/1st Marines, Lima Co. as a Platoon Radio Operator, E-4/ Corporal and served in Iraq.

Thank you for your local & National service!



(left) CPT Wayne Broky; MAJ Craig & Becky Reed, Past Chapter Cdr; (right) LTC Dave Lynch, Sr. Vice Cdr; LTC Craig Cummins, Adj. &, Lt Col Neil G. Horlbeck, USAF, Ret.



Lt. Matt Balady #994, VA Police Dept.—Phoenix Medical Center, Patrol Operations & Terrorism Liaison Ofc. #1391; USMC, OIF—CPL 2005-2010



**Public Safety; Law & Order Program
Apache Trail Meeting—Guest Speaker 17 May 2022**

Arizona Native Lt. Balady comes from a long line of Marines. Immediately after high school he was sent to San Diego for Boot Camp. His goal to be an MP K9 dog handler. Deployed to Iraq twice (OIF), he did accomplish his goal and deployed as a K9 handler as an individual in support of Navy, the 3rd ID/Army, SEALs & SF units. His K9 was an explosives detector. He returned to Twenty-Nine Palms and landed in Yuma as a duty station. He had the opportunity to provide security for State Department officials & work with the Secret Service with his dog, with additional duty in Mexico, South America, Indonesia, Europe and Phoenix. Lt. Balady was slated for Intelligence school and has discovered in his current position, has used this skill set the most. Lt. Balady enjoys working with like-minded individuals in his current VA Police position, & acknowledged DoD & the VA have different missions. For the past six years, he has enjoyed working with veterans in his service to his community. He enjoys the One Team One Fight concept working together to help veterans. Lt. Balady is a Supervisor for outlying VA hospital facilities in Gilbert, Scottsdale, Phoenix, Show Low & in-the-works Mesa. While at the Phoenix location, he has provided security for the US Secretary for Veterans Affairs, The Honorable Denis McDonough.

Responding to member questions. Lt. Balady advised staffing at the Phoenix VA is planned to increase significantly in the Police Department, adding 20-30 more new officers. COVID dampened hospital use & mental health support for veterans was particularly affected with mental health staff using telehealth. He advised through the Mission Act, veterans can request mental health support in their community paid by the VA. Often he finds his skill set includes a good amount of social work. He noted our military mentality of not needing help, encouraging us all to ask for help when needed. Becoming a qualified VA Police Officer requires a 10-week VA Academy in Little Rock, Arkansas. Filling positions across the country was significantly impacted when this academy was closed during COVID-19. Lt. Balady stated prior law enforcement experience informs their work but the VA solution for working with veterans is different: *“give the veteran a solution vs. hurting them with arresting or charging them, offering solutions.”* Body cams (\$500 each) for VA Police are coming, the issue is where to store the data.

Thank You for your National & Community Service!!



Public Safety; Law & Order Program
Apache Trail Meeting—Guest Speaker
17 May 2022

Corporal Joe DeCormis,
VA Police Dept.
—Phoenix
Medical Center,
Patrol Opns,
Air Force
SSgt 1983-1989

Retiring after 24 years with the Tucson (Pima County) Sheriff's Department, Corporal Joe DeCormis was a LT/Commander supervising 500 officers: Bomb squad, SWAT, Search & Rescue, Narcotics, Patrol & Internal Affairs. After 5-6 months of retirement, he worked at the Tucson VA for 3-4 years, then applied for the Phoenix VA.

His Grandfather a Korean & VN veteran, he encouraged Cpl. DeCormis to become a lawyer. Instead, right after high school in 1983, he joined the Air Force. He stated his DI was a good influence. He then attended DLI Monterey for Korean language training. Intense language immersion, fluent in reading, writing, speaking, typing tripped his progress. Completing 9 of the 12 weeks he preferred to cross-train as a KC-135 mechanic.

Corporal DeCormis “loves police work.” He enjoys being busy, the variety of work & acknowledging, policing in a medical facility on federal property is different from civilian policing in communities. He acknowledged the different mindset of being “veteran centered & “being more understanding,” perhaps having probable cause to arrest but intervening with solutions for veterans. Corporal DeCormis noted he has observed more mental health issues now than when he started in 1989. Now police departments/officers are not given the benefit of the doubt. Interpersonal skills & active listening increasingly when working with stressed veterans is paramount. He emphasized the VA “bends over backwards” to help veterans with mental health concerns. On reflection, he realized his Grandfather suffered from PTSD after his tours in Korea & VN with explosive anger. Families in the 70's & 80's did not have the knowledge on how to work with returning veterans. The VA now offers help to family members with their veterans with mental health issues. Corporal DeCormis made a special request of chapter members to pray for all law enforcement officers. He emphasized that city, state, county officers are under “tremendous pressure” as he has seen a significant shift in our culture.

**Thank You for your National
& Community Service!!**





MSgt Jeanne Erickson, Chapter Marshall & Girl Scout Program Chair, with Chapter Marshall & Jr. Vice Cdr LTC Chuck Erickson.



Veterans Affairs Program

**17 May 2022 Apache Trail
luncheon—Recap**

MSgt Jeanne Erickson updated members on the Arizona State Retirement System First Permanent Benefit Increase (PBI), for State of Arizona Retirees since 2005. She provided handouts helping members calculate their eligibility for this benefit.

The Arizona State Retirement System (ASRS) Board met on 12 November 2021 and, “...*determined that ASRS had ‘excess earnings’ as defined by state law...the Board approved an \$11.49 Permanent Benefit Increase (PBI)...*” to qualifying members. “*To qualify, ASRS retirees must have an original ASRS membership date of September 12, 2013 or earlier, and have retired by July 31, 2021.*”



Your money. Your future. Secure for your lifetime.

**Thank You for this
Chapter Member
Update!!**



LTC Patrick C. Stolze, USA, Ret. assumes Command for his **2nd term as Chapter Commander.**

Installation of Chapter Leadership

17 May 2022 Apache Trail Chapter—Recap



Guest Dignitary:

Region XIII VCinC

Lt Col Marlon Ruiz, USAF, Ret.

Congratulations to our

New & Returning Chapter Leadership!

LTC Chuck Erickson, USA, Ret., Jr. Vice Commander
LTC David Lynch, USA, Ret., Sr. Vice Commander.



Thanks to **VCinC Lt Col Ruiz** for traveling from Tucson to install Apache Trail Chapter Leaders for the 2022-2023 Activity Year. After the formal ceremony, Lt Col Ruiz emphasized LTC Stolze' exemplary capabilities & continued triple-hatted duties as the Region XIII & Department of Arizona Commanders for the 3rd year, & now Apache Trail Chapter Commander for a 2nd tour, having served as Commander from 2017 through 2019.

Lt Col Ruiz emphasized chapter members must recruit a strong increased working membership, emphasizing that individual members being multi-hatted should not continue to be the norm.

Lt Col Ruiz encouraged LTC Stolze to continue to "inspire & mentor members to replace," him this time next year. Let's do our part as chapter mem-

bers to increase our working membership ranks this year. Thanks to several members whom have already invited potential members (Craig Cummins & Diane McDowell) & for those who succeeded—LTC Stolze recruiting Lt Col Brian Walker!!

For The Good of the Order: MAJ Rosanne E. Trujillo, Editor

ASU ROTC Joint (Army, Navy & Air Force) National Awards Ceremony-2022



Maj Craig D. Moore,
Operations Officer, ASU
AFROTC with MSGT
Jamie Weaver, Senior
Military Instructor. MSGT
Weaver extended
invitation to MAJ Trujillo



2022 ROTC Joint
National Awards
Presenters: Daughter's
of the American
Revolution, VFW, Purple
Heart, MOAA, USAA,
MOWW & AUSA.

ASU Army ROTC—Spring Awards 2022—Continued

Sun Devil Battalion
Change-of-Command
Ceremony, 21 April 2022.

"Feel the Heat!"



Veterans Honor Stole Ceremony 7 May 2022— Desert Financial Arena

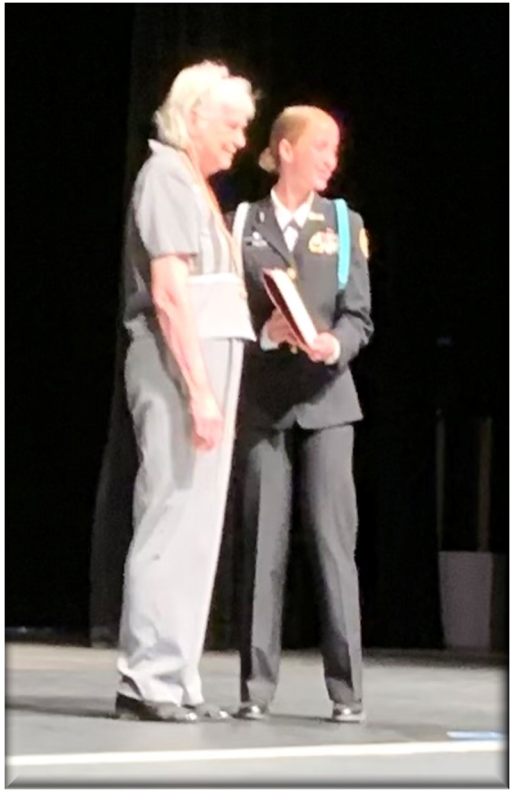
"To recognize the military service & academic accomplishments of graduating ASU student veterans, the Pat Tillman Veterans Center & ASU Alumni Association will be co-hosting the Veterans Honor Stole Ceremony. ... student veterans will be presented with their veteran stole & recognized for their accomplishments. Participation is open to all student veterans, active duty, reservists & National Guard graduating in the fall & spring semesters. Academic regalia is not required. Visit <https://veterans.asu.edu/veterans-honor-stole-ceremony> for more information."



ASU Army ROTC by the numbers:

- ◆ Ranked 5th nationally of 274
- ◆ 45 Lieutenants commissioned each year

JROTC Program—Spring Awards 2022



We have had a stellar Spring Awards season Thanks to **ROTC/JROTC Program Chair Maj Lew White** and to our 2022 Spring Awards season **chapter member presenters:**



COL Christine F. Mahon
Lt Col Carol McKnight with Mrs. Diane McDowell
Lt Col George Heileman
LTC Patrick C. Stolze
LTC David Lynch
LTC Craig Cummins
Maj Lew White
MAJ Craig Reed
MAJ Rosanne Trujillo (9 Certificates + medal sets at the ASU ROTC (Army, AF, Navy) Joint ceremony.

3 May 2022, Lt Col Carol McKnight, USAF, Ret. presented a deserving **Apache Junction Navy JROTC Cadet** with our MOWW Certificate & Medal Set. The **Senior Naval Science Instructor is LCDR Gary Lock.**

Lt Col McKnight is an Apache Trail Chapter Past Commander. **Mrs. Diane McDowell** is our Junior Vice Commander.

LTC Craig Cummins, USA, Ret. presented an MOWW Certificate & medal set on 10 May 2022, to **AFJROTC Cadet Skylar Ervin**, Westwood HS. **Lt Col Joseph Abel** is the **Department Chair.**

LTC Patrick C. Stolze, USA, Ret., presented an MOWW Certificate & Medal set to **Cadet Alexander Hacker, Basha HS AFJROTC.** **Col Cliff Stansell** is the Aerospace Senior Instructor. LTC Stolze is an Apache Trail Chapter Past Commander & currently Region XIII & Dept. of Arizona Commander.

Thank You for your time!!



ASU Army ROTC Program—Spring Awards 2022



(Left) An invitation extended to MAJ Trujillo by **MAJ Jonathon Palumbo, XO/Asst. Professor of Military Science**, to attend the 11 May 2022 ROTC Sun Devil Battalion Spring 2022 Commissioning Ceremony at Old Main. Twenty-six new Second Lieutenants were given the Oath of Office by (right) **LTC Erich Schneider, ASU Professor of Military Science**.



Six branched Infantry; Two—QM; Two—MI; One—Signal; Four—Medical Service; One—FA; One—Aviation; Two—Ordnance; Two—Armor; One—AG; Two—MP; One—Engineer; One—TC. Six of the 26 are women.

(Left) Keynote speaker **Associate Dean Dr. Paul LePore**, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences. Dr. LePore gave an overview on how the ROTC program evolved, and stated 5,200 Second Lieutenants are commissioned through ROTC programs across the country.



(Left) **Dr. Jeanne J. Blaes, COL, USA, Ret.**, President, AUSA AZ Territorial Chapter 7202 presents **2LT Leon Westenkirchner** with the Task Force Smith Award, Certificate & Sabre in recognition of being a Distinguished Military Graduate & National Top 10% Cadet.

**Region XIII/Dept of AZ/Dept of RM/Dept of RG/
Chapters/YLC—Strategic Planning Committee
ZOOM Meeting—Highlights
7 April 2022**



Facilitated by LTC Patrick C. Stolze, Region XIII VCinC
Lt Col Marlon Ruiz —Opening Remarks.

Reports & Comments

- ◆ Recruiting + Hosting the 2024 or 2026 Convention + End of Year Reporting
- ◆ Annual Dividend and Form 990-N Filing + End of Year Program Award Submissions
- ◆ Chapter National Citations/Silver PHA's/Outstanding Service Awards—Update the Order's Web Page + CinC's Solicitation
- ◆ Attending the National Convention in Jacksonville, FL August 2 thru 7, 2022
- ◆ Region—Department-Chapter Succession Plans/Nominations.

Highlights

- To our credit **Region XIII** team work & talent, has the best reputation across all Regions, understandable members aging out & issue not falling on deaf ears at National HQ—**Lt Col Marlon Ruiz**
- **Would like AZ to host 2024 convention in Tucson.** The 2023 will be in Annapolis, Maryland—**LTC Patrick C. Stolze**. Chapters polled by LTC Stolze declined opportunity to host any convention in AZ. **Update:** LTC Stolze is in communication with a representative from the Convention-planning group, Helms-Briscoe to determine the most cost-effective site to hold our Convention. We are in competition with Region III who also wants to host the 2024 Convention. A decision as to which Region will host the 2024 Convention and which will be asked to host the 2025 Convention should be made by June 8, 2022.
- **Recruiting.** Region XIII has moved up to 6th position out of 10 Regions. Our Chapter is in 7th place within the Region. We have only recruited one new Companion this year.

Continued Next Page

Region XIII/Dept of AZ/Dept of RM/Dept of RG/Chapters/YLC — Strategic Planning Committee ZOOM Meeting—Highlights—Continued

- **End of Year Reporting** by Excel spreadsheet vs. Form 27 as in the past. It is not on the MOWW website, COS will send spreadsheet to Regions for chapter reporting.
- **Annual PM Dividend** was sent to chapters after 15 April 2022 & received.
- **End of Year Program Award Submissions.** Encouraged by LTC Stolze to submit as many awards as possible NLT S: 1 June 2022.
- **Region XIII due a change of command.** LTC Stolze volunteered to remain one more year if chapters are in agreement.
- **Region XIII Treasurer Report—**LCDR Coy Ritchie reported \$846.17 in the account. **1 July 2022, Chapter dues to be sent to him NLT.** Down to 8 chapters from our original 9 thus costs will rise per chapter. The Hub/Spoke may cost \$391.33. The 2021 **ZOOM account cost** was \$114.99 and may rise this year.
- **Region XIII Scouting Coordinator—Mr. Chuck Mackey.** Seeking speakers to support Citizen Merit Badges. Girl Scout Troops are showing interest in MOWW Certificates. Initiative to encourage Boy Scouts & JROTC cadets to attend annual conferences.
- **YLC Colorado Springs Chapter—**COL Stephen Schambach reported target is 99, currently they have 64 signed up.
- **Denver Chapter—**LCDR Coy Ritchie reported several members in the hospital with health issues & aging out.
- **Apache Trail Chapter reported COL Roy Coulson** celebrated 100th birthday. HQ sent him a Centenary Certificate.

For the Good of the Order: MAJ Rosanne E. Trujillo, Past Commander/Editor

ROTC & JROTC Program

On 29 April 2022, COL Christine F. Mahon, presented MOWW Certificates & medal sets to deserving cadets at **Vista Grande HS, Casa Grande, AZ**. Senior Instructor is CW03 Tyrone (Dr.) Hall, Ret. and MSgt Jorge Rico. This was a 47 mile commute! **JROTC Marine Corps**

(cguhsd.org) She was accompanied by **Mr. Chuck Mackey, Scouting Program Chair & Region XIII Scouting Coordinator**. Thanks' to both of you for your time on our chapter's

behalf.

Photo Credit:

Mr. Chuck Mackey





- ◆ 30 May 2022 Memorial Day Observance
- ◆ 18 June 2022, Region XIII Spring Hybrid Conference, Tucson.
- ◆ 5-9 July AZYLC, ASU West Campus, Phoenix.
- ◆ 2-7 August 2022, MOWW Convention, Jacksonville, Florida
- ◆ Chapter Summer Hiatus June, July & August. No meetings or luncheons. Enjoy your summer!



*Staff meeting & luncheon dates
TBD*

Reach//US

*Apache Trail
Chapter*

MAJ Rosanne E. Trujillo USA,
Ret., Editor
Email: rosannetrujillo@centurylink.net

MOWW—Region XIII
[https://
www.mowwscv.com/](https://www.mowwscv.com/)

Facebook page
[https://www.facebook.com/
apachetrails/](https://www.facebook.com/apachetrails/)

www.moww.org

