



Military Order of the World Wars

Serving youth, community, and nation

By Sonia Duggan

For 103 years, members of one of the nation's oldest patriotic, non-partisan veterans service organizations have continued to serve their communities — and their country — with a purpose to “promote patriotism, civic responsibility, public service and leadership in the nation's communities.”

Today, over 6,300 men and women in 14 regions are members (companions) of the Military Order of the World Wars (MOWW), founded by former General of the Armies John J. “Blackjack” Pershing, who encouraged his officers to form an organization so they could continue serving their country — but in a different capacity — following World War I.

The organization has an impressive roster of past and



Commander in Chief Michael Okin and Chapter 234 Commander Jacques Loraine

present Commanders in Chief — including Maj. Gen. Douglas MacArthur — and its 91st Commander in Chief, retired Lt. Col. Michael Okin, is tasked with equipping and leading the nonprofit into the future.

Region 8 serves nine chapters in Texas, two in Oklahoma and one in Kansas. Serving in a dual capacity for MOWW as Vice Commander

of Region 8 and Commander of the North Texas MOWW Chapter 234 is retired U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer 4 Jacques Loraine of Wylie. Loraine, a retired Raytheon executive, has an extensive background in Army intelligence and served in the Air Force.

Loraine first joined Dallas, one of the area's largest chapters, upon his retirement in

2016, but said he eventually found his way to the smaller North Texas chapter, “so he could get into more leadership functions.”

Aside from Loraine, the chapter's leadership includes retired U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Gary Bunch as Vice Commander, retired U.S. Marine Corps Chief Warrant Officer 5 Quint Avenetti as Adjutant and retired U.S. Air Force Captain Keith Barrett as Treasurer.

Under their leadership, the North Texas Chapter added new members to its roster, said Loraine, and, “re-committed to growing, doing things for the community by leveraging what we were doing very successfully for many years with youth leadership, JROTC, Scouting programs, Public Safety and First Re-

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sponsor community kinds of activities.”

Chapter 234 companions meet the third Tuesday of each month at the Bavarian Grill in Plano from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. for lunch and a program. Meeting programs, according to northtexasmoww.org, are focused on the chapter’s area of service to “our youth, our communities and our nation.”

One of the key goals of MOWW is to serve America’s youth through patriotic education and ceremonies. Loraine said the size of the North Texas chapter allows them to focus and expand upon things such as its Youth Leadership Program.

“We’ve had a good youth leadership conference environment within this region,” he said. “We set up, at the regional level, a coordination team that reaches out to universities, sets up the programs. Then, we have a core function at the chapter levels that reach out to the school systems to find the rising juniors and seniors at the high school level to be able to participate.”

Youth Leadership Conferences (YLC) are multi-day conferences attended by high

school students hosted by MOWW throughout the U.S.

Bunch, who serves as the Texas A&M University YLC Director, said “the multi-day YLCs are funded educational conferences that provide U.S. high school students the chance to develop leadership skills via patriotic education.”

YLC classes are led by skilled instructors and supervised by well-qualified team leaders and counselors. Class time is dedicated to leadership; U.S. government, U.S. history and the U.S. Constitution, Patriotism, and Americanism; and the Free Enterprise System and the U.S. economy.

“The expectation is that the students will return to their high schools with a better understanding of what a leader truly is, how they lead effectively and impart that knowledge to their peers,” Bunch said.

Students are initially culled with the aid of high school counselors, Loraine said, from the standard student body, “not just the JROTC.”

According to the YLC rules, Loraine said they are limited to a certain number of JROTC high school students they can bring to the program “because we don’t want it to be military focused.”

The program, Loraine joked, is really “all about civics on steroids” and includes topics that are “just not taught in the school system.”

This year, the chapter’s Youth Leadership Coordination team selected two Wylie AFJROTC students, Senior Treyden Hallan and Junior Christopher Troncoso, to represent the organization at the annual conference at Texas A&M University in June.

In September, Treyden



Christopher & Treyden

and Christopher were awarded the prestigious MOWW Youth Merit Medal by Loraine for “outstanding leadership and demonstrated patriotism” at the YLC.

“They consistently demonstrated powerful leadership, superb articulation, outstanding intellect and superior poise and self-confidence throughout the YLC Conference,” Loraine said.

Christopher said, “it really does serve as a good point of reference for how to lead and I am incredibly thankful for the opportunity to go not just to the conference, but for also being selected to receive the Youth Merit Medal by my peers.”

In the future, Loraine said MOWW hopes to bring students to the U.S. Capitol which would be “a very different selection process.”

MOWW also sponsors award programs for Reserve Officer Training Corps and JROTC cadets, Boy Scouts of America, and Girl Scouts of the USA. Additionally, chapters formally honor those who excel in national security, homeland security, and law and order arenas. Recently, the chapter awarded a Meritorious Service Award to Sean James, a Fate resident and U.S. Navy veteran, for rescuing three children from a burning car.

After several years of working “under the radar for youth in the City of Wylie,” Loraine said he, Bunch and chapter chaplain, Retired

Army Lt. Col. Robert Welch II briefed Wylie City Council in August on “The MOWW — who we are and what we do” to bring awareness to their nonprofit.

Because the chapter’s focus really is to serve their communities, Loraine pointed out that they support other veteran service-related entities such as Patriot Paws and Patriot Anglers, among others, as well.

The commander said they are also working to form a relationship with American Legions in Wylie and Rockwall “so we can get some synergies between the veteran’s organizations to do better things for the community.”

MOWW companions live by the motto, “It’s nobler to serve than be served.” And for those who want to continue serving their country as a patriot while working with youth, veterans and other community outreach programs, and getting the message out, eligibility is open to active duty, retired and former commissioned or warrant officers of the uniformed services of the United States.

When Loraine’s term as commander is complete, he plans to become even more active in youth leadership in what he describes as “one of the best, least known veteran’s organizations in America.”



Vice Commander Gary Bunch



Chaplain Welch, Loraine & Bunch