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Winter 2021 • Spring 2022



OVER NEVADA

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80th Anniversary Edition



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HEADQUARTERS

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Civil Air Patrol
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Col. Deborah A. Pierce

Editor
Lt. Col. Mohammed High

Nevada Wing of the Civil Air Patrol is the highest echelon in the state of Nevada and was chartered on December 1, 1941. Nevada Wing contributed to the state and nation through search and rescue and military support roles during the World War II. Since then, Nevada Wing has provided emergency services, aerospace education, and cadet programs throughout the nation's seventh largest state. Learn more about Nevada Wing's storied history: <https://nvwg.cap.gov/about/nevada-wings-80th-anniversary>

Nevada Wing 80th Anniversary logo created by Cadet 2nd Lt. Cameron Hranac, Reno Composite Squadron.

Cover design: Capt. Maryan Tooker, Nevada Wing Public Affairs Officer.

For information on advertising rates and space, please call: 1-800-635-6036

COMMANDER'S CORNER



*By Col. Deborah A. Pierce, CAP
Nevada Wing Commander*

We are actually having an in-person Wing Conference this year! It will be the last Saturday in October (Oct 30th), at the Eldorado Resort in downtown Reno. We'll also be doing virtual coverage of some of it, but I encourage you to come in person if you can. Masks and distancing WILL be required regardless of vaccination status. It's been a while since we've seen each other; let's get together and rekindle our relationships! *It's our 80th Anniversary as Nevada Wing so let's celebrate!* You'll read more about our storied history in this issue of Silver Wings Over Nevada.

Our brand-new Cadet Advisory Council (CAC) chair, Cadet 1st Lt. (and pilot) Luz Sandoval, and the new CAC representatives from each squadron are working on activities for our cadets. Got an idea to share in that regard? Let your squadron rep know. They want to keep our Cadet Corps engaged and YOU can help!

Folks, thank you all for staying with CAP, inside and outside of Nevada Wing, throughout this unprecedented viral pandemic. It's been a tough go, but we'll get through this together – ONE CAP!

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SALUTING OUR NEVADA WING VOLUNTEERS ORIGINS



The origins of Nevada Wing date to December 1, 1941, soon after the first Nevada Wing Commander, Edward J. Questa, was appointed by Nevada Governor Edward Carville.

E.J. met with the press and explained the new organization's purpose and what its organizational structure would be. On page 20 of the December 18, 1941, edition *Reno Evening Gazette*, a headline read "Civil Air Patrol To Be Organized Here."

Today, Nevada Wing volunteers continue serving America's communities, saving lives, and shaping futures.



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FOR INFORMATION CALL 25105, 24915 or 21376

Las Vegas Fliers Hunt Lost Pilot

March 26, 1943
Plane Missing In Rough Area

Las Vegas civil air patrol moved their base from St. George to Cedar City this morning and resumed their search for a missing CAP courier pilot in the rough country of southwestern Utah. The southern Nevada squadron is assisting the Utah wing in a widespread search by air which has been in progress since Monday.



Feb. 11, 1942



Wing Commander E. J. Questa, Reno banker, is wing commander of the civil air patrol for Nevada.

Many Volunteer In Air Patrol

Non-Fliers Join Defense Unit

E. J. Questa, vice president of the First National Bank of Nevada, who is wing commander of the civil air patrol for Nevada, reports that applications for enlistment in the civil air patrol have been most satisfactory, with the



1940s CAP Pilot Wings



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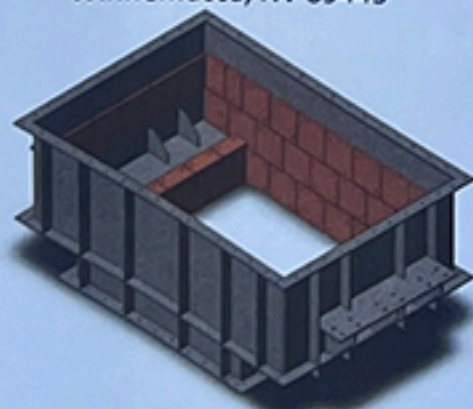
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Founding of the Nevada Wing

Lt. Col. William Aceves, CAP
NVWG Historian

Gill Robb Wilson, described in Frank Blazich's recent book on the Civil Air Patrol as the 'intellectual founder' of the organization, started the ball rolling on the creation of the Civil Air Patrol in 1939. He realized that aviation in the United States would be severely curtailed, if not

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outright banned, within the country should it be dragged into the wars that were being fought on the sides of the oceans that flanked the U.S. mainland. He sought out other similarly minded individuals and they studied what could be done to utilize civilian general aviation as a very useful tool to support whatever national effort for the upcoming involvement in the two-ocean war would look like. By 1941 some individual states were attempting to do the same within their own borders, but Wilson, et al, was thinking along the lines of a national organization.

Edward J. Questa Given Commission



EDWARD J. QUESTA

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They studied with great interest the individual state aviation plans. In Ohio, the Civilian Air Reserve (CAR) had been formed in 1939, and by 1941 other CAR units had been formed in Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Maine, Massachusetts, New York, and Pennsylvania. These groups, with a military organizational structure, would serve their individual states and remain distant from the military. It was clear that civilian pilots wanted to contribute their skills and their machines to a worthy cause.

The Federal government also realized that organizing the civilian side of the house was a necessary priority, and President Roosevelt began creating several agencies and offices to study what was needed to prepare the civilian population for war: The Office of Emergency Management, Council on National Defense, National Defense Advisory Commission, and others, came into existence.

In September 1940, President Franklin D. Roosevelt called up the National Guard. States that were counting on being able to use the Guard's aviation units now found themselves without their own air forces.

Although the concept of the CAR was catching on and was the front runner for what the national organization would be, it was New Jersey's Civil Air Defense Service (CADS), with its Civil Air Guard (CAG), that fit the bill (It didn't hurt that Wilson was

assisting in its creation) It stressed civilian cooperation with the military. That was the clincher as far as Wilson and his group were concerned.

On May 20, 1941, President Roosevelt created another agency, the Office of Civilian Defense (OCD), and named New York's Mayor, Fiorello LaGuardia, as its director. LaGuardia himself was a former Great War bomber pilot. LaGuardia created a committee to advise him on aviation matters and appointed Wilson as one of its members. Wilson now had the ear of the head of the OCD.

In early July, Wilson and LaGuardia sent their plan to Washington for consideration. Because it was an aviation matter, the plan was delivered to the Army's aviation office. The sign on the office door read "Major General Henry H. Arnold, Commander, U.S. Army Air Forces". General Arnold was receptive to the plan and began detailing officers to work on making the plan a reality. The CADS plan was considered superior, more fleshed out, and with a better chance of success. General Arnold would have several discussions with LaGuardia and Wilson, and the staff he had assigned, as well as other civilians in related agencies over the next months. By September they had refined the program and decided to call it the Civil Air Patrol.

Although most of the political and civic leaders of the day knew that America's involvement in the war was imminent, nobody knew exactly when, or where, the real war for the U.S. would start. The U.S. was already being shot at by Japan and Germany. In December 1937, the gunboat U.S.S. Panay, PR-5, and four small Standard American oil tankers were sunk on the Yangtze River in China by Japanese aircraft, supposedly a case of misidentification. In the Atlantic, two American destroyers that were escorting British convoys were torpedoed; on October 17, 1941, the U.S.S. Kearney, DD-432, was torpedoed and severely damaged near Iceland, and two weeks later, on October 31, the U.S.S. Reuben James, DD-245, was torpedoed and sunk, also near Iceland. The shooting had already started.

On December 1, 1941, LaGuardia signed a memo that was intended to get the pamphlet about CAP to the GPO. Later that week, he was informed that General Curry's name had never made it the GPO; the presses were still waiting for the name so they could start printing the CAP pamphlet and CAP enlistment forms. The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor caught everyone - the U.S. government, the military,





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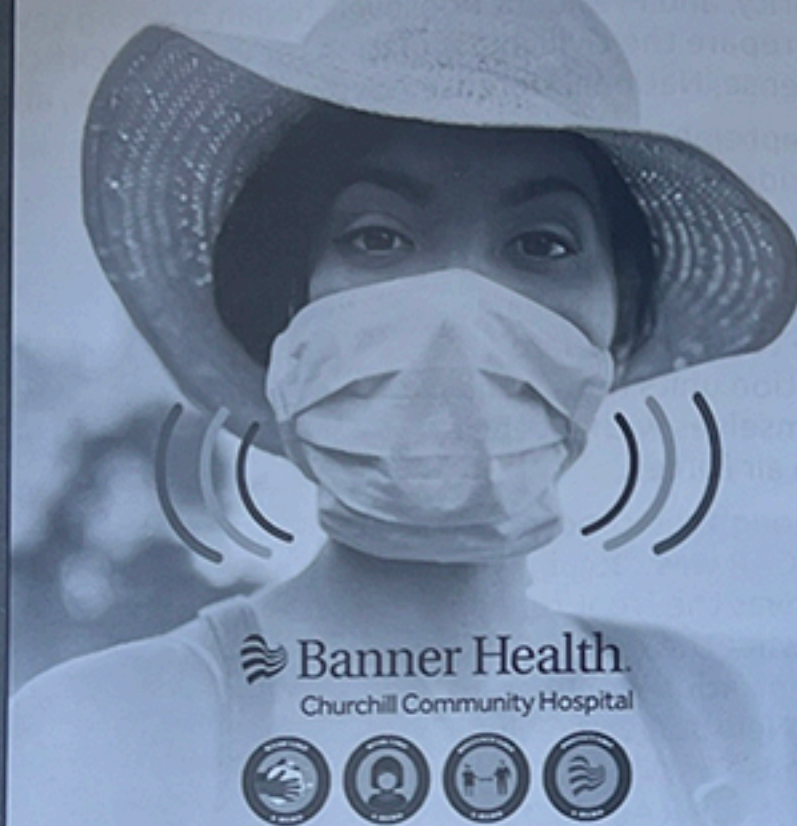
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the OCD, and the fledgling National Headquarters staff - by surprise. Nobody was truly ready. On December 8, LaGuardia signed OCD Administration Order No. 9, formally creating the Civil Air Patrol, and GPO finally started rolling.

With archives at the Nevada State Capitol and the University of Nevada, Reno, unavailable right now due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, the exact date when Nevada Governor Edward Carville received the message about his needing to appoint a wing commander, as well as any memos that may have been written on the topic (such as who was considered or recommended), are not currently known. What can be surmised is that it was sometime between November 28 and December 11.

Buried on page 20 of the December 11 edition of the Reno Gazette Journal was a two-sentence announcement of the appointment that day by Gov. Carville of E.J. Questa as "the director of the civilian aeronautics organization for Nevada" and that EJ would head to Washington D.C. on Saturday for a conference.



Mounted CAP Unit - Summer of 1942.

Immediately upon returning from the three-day conference, EJ spoke to reporters. On December 18 he met with the press and explained the organization's purpose and what its organizational structure would be. Still buried on page 20, but with its headline, for the first time a Nevada newspaper called the new organization by its correct name: "Civil Air Patrol To Be Organized Here".

Upon returning from the conference, EJ hit the ground running. He began by speaking with many of the contacts he had developed over the years

-- businessmen, educators, airport owners, pilots, local ranchers, law enforcement, forestry service, and government leaders -- explained what this new organization was about, and convinced many of them to join, assigning several to key staff positions on his nascent wing staff.

EJ had his work cut out for him -- trying to form a working state organization that had no equipment, no well-defined mission, and only him as a member -- and trying to function as a bank vice president to boot. His office at 206 North Virginia Street would function as the Nevada Wing Headquarters until January 1942, when the headquarters moved across the street to 130 North Virginia Street and into the office of one of his wing staff members.

The folks that would make up National Headquarters had spent the months before December 1 doing their homework, compiling a vast number of statistics: populations of states (the 1940 census having just competed), the number of airports within each state, the number of pilots within each state according to the Civil Aeronautics Administration (CAA), the number of schools, especially high schools, and so on. By December 1941, they had developed a basic plan with goals for each wing. Nevada, with its population of 110,000, had the lowest population of any of the 48 states (Wyoming, the second least populated state, had more than twice the population of Nevada), so the Nevada Wing was expected to have the fewest numbers of members (smaller than Rhode Island!) if things were to go to plan.

Meeting with his key staff, EJ and the staff came to realize that the bulk of their air missions would be focused on search and rescue. With Army Air Force training taking place either directly over or passing through, the airspace over Nevada, there would be several crashes, either due to pilot inexperience, bad

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RENO EVENING GAZETTE

Civil Air Patrol Is Ready For Active Service in State

Ground Force to Aid Fliers Still To Be Organized Under Defense Plan

Reno's civil air patrol squadron, part of the state-wide wing, is organized so it could go into active service today, according to Carl F. Johnson, executive officer of the Nevada wing. The Reno squadron is first of a series covering the entire state to reach operating efficiency. Others, in various cities of the state are being organized rapidly.

The civil air patrol, recently organized under the office of civilian defense, is under direct command of Maj. Gen. John F. Curry, former commander of Hamilton field and of the war department general staff. Civilian in character, the CAP follows the army air corps in organization, discipline, and operation. In many ways it parallels air corps functions except it has no combat facilities.

The Reno squadron has still some vacancies, chiefly among ground personnel. Flying assignments for pilots and trained observers have filled quickly, and mechanics and ground crews are enlisting rapidly, according to Questa.

A force of about fifty men will be needed soon, it was stated, to provide a well disciplined, highly trained ground patrol. These men need not be pilots but should be reasonably able bodied and familiar with firearms. Functions of this echelon will be to guard

crashed aircraft pending investigation by air corps or CAA officials, protection of airports and planes in time of emergency, emergency.

Citizens wishing to enlist in this rapidly growing branch of civilian defense may obtain information at the headquarters in Suite 16, Ar-manko building, 150 North Virginia street.

weather, or mechanical failure (military piston aircraft engines of the time, although quite good for the era, were not as reliable as the engines that power the aircraft of today - aircraft engine technology, as well as that of radio navigation technology, has come a long way).

But it would not be enough to simply locate a downed aircraft by air. If a pilot and/or crew had survived the crash, most probably it would be necessary to get to them with medical aid and bring them out. Some sort of ground units would also be required. Helicopters were still undergoing development at the time, and therefore unavailable.

Most of Nevada was quite barren, more so than today. A small network of paved roads existed, with most other roads being dirt and gravel, with almost all of them located on ranchland. An ambulance could possibly make it to the dirt road nearest a crash site, but even then, most of the crash sites would still be miles away. So, in addition to aviation units, Nevada Wing formed a mechanized unit, the Washoe Mechanized Unit* (by the fall of 1942 it would be complete with a mobile hospital).

* The Reno Mechanized Unit was disbanded after the war and not to be confused with the Washoe Jeep Squadron that was founded about December 1950.

Also formed within Nevada Wing was the only mounted unit ever

formed within CAP. Working together, the air units would find the objective of the search, communicate the position of the target to the ground units by either radio (if the aircraft had one) or message drop, and the ground units would converge on the crash site. The mechanized units would get as close as possible, and the mounted unit would get to the crash, render first aid, and bring the victim(s) to the waiting CAP ambulance(s), either on horseback or on a stretcher carried between two horses.

The first unit to be stood up was the Squadron 961-1 (Air). It was quickly followed by the second unit, Squadron 962-1 (Mounted). The third unit quickly followed, Squadron 963-1 (Mechanized). During the war, only three units were designated squadrons within the Nevada Wing, all of them in Reno. The other units raised further away from Reno were designated as flights. This was probably since Reno was the

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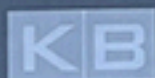
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population center of the state, and therefore, could raise larger units more easily. Las Vegas would not overtake Reno in terms of the population until after the war.

EJ found that getting airport operators and pilots to work with the Nevada Wing was not as hard as one would have thought. Not only were airport operators filled with patriotism, but for the smaller airport operators, there were financial considerations. Given that all flying within 100 miles of all coasts was now prohibited and general aviation even within the interior of the U.S was all but eliminated, if an airport that was not already servicing commercial air flights wanted to survive, and if Nevada pilots wanted to still fly, EJ's Nevada Wing was the only game in town.

EJ began hitting the speaking circuit talking up CAP and the Nevada Wing wherever he went -- Kiwanis Club meetings, business clubs, professional organizations, pilot associations and clubs, ladies garden clubs -- none were immune to his efforts.

He found himself not only going to meetings to try and advance CAP and the Nevada Wing, but in one instance he worked to get members of a Reno squadron exempted from a local ordinance. In Reno, a zoning ordinance made it illegal to keep livestock in the backyard of a residence. This posed a problem for the equestrian members of Squadron 962-1 (Mounted). Most of them boarded their horses outside the city on farms and small ranches. They argued that valuable time was wasted in driving to wherever their mounts were stabled to get them into trailers and moved to the mission location. Lives could possibly be saved if they could load their mounts into the trailers at their homes, and head directly to the search area from there. EJ, Nevada Wing, and Squadron 962-1 (Mounted) prevailed, and on June 20 the Reno City Council granted members of the mounted unit an exemption to the no-livestock ordinance that remained in force for the duration.

CIVIL AIR PATROL TO BE ORGANIZED HERE

Organization of the Nevada state wing of the civil air patrol, composed of pilots from every state, is now under way, it was announced today by E. J. Questa, Nevada wing commander, following his return from a three day session of state commanders held in Washington, D. C.

Group and squadron commanders and staffs are being named, and the wing organization will be completed and ready to function by the time applications have been checked in Washington with the FBI and other agencies and sent back for assignment to local units, Questa said. He said an office will be open here as soon as space is available.

While civil aviation is now under restriction and will probably continue under some restriction in this country, plans are gradually being placed in effect under which as large a measure of such activity will be allowed to continue as is possible without interfering with the country's defense, he said.

Plans and programs developed at headquarters under Maj. Gen. John

Unlike today's grade structure, once the wear of military was authorized, grade then was determined by the duties one was assigned. Wing commanders, unless they had held a higher grade in the military before joining CAP, were Majors. Squadron commanders were 1st Lieutenants. Pilots, observers, mechanics, radio operators, and others were given enlisted grades.

Nevada Wing Headquarters, realizing that most of the operations would be taking place on private ranches, needed to establish some sort of working arrangement with the ranchers. So, in May, EJ announced the formation of the 'Range Command' and appealed to the farmers, ranchers, ranchers, and residents in mining districts in the remote areas to apply. Their knowledge of the surrounding areas would be invaluable to the mission of the Nevada Wing.

Additionally, it would put CAP rescue assets closer to where they would be needed, instead of having to either fly or drive from Reno, where most members and assets were located. Soon, flights were popping up in communities such as Battle Mountain, Carson City, Elko, Ely, Gardnerville, Hawthorne, Las Vegas, Yerington, and others.

Nevada Wing also experimented with standing up a pigeon unit, a parachute unit, a ski and snowshoe unit, and the Ground Auxiliary of the Range Command. These folks worked with CAP, Army, and Army Air Corps. It was made up of Nevada ranchers, miners, highway works, and most county sheriff departments. All were recruited to aid CAP in locating lost people, crashes, and patrol defense areas.

Eighty years later, Civil Air Patrol is evolving to meet the needs of the 21st century. CAP's ability to adapt, adopt, and develop the technology, tools, and programs to serve our communities, save lives, and shape the trajectory of young lives should inspire people to join our cause as a force for good. Nevada Wing volunteers continue serving America's communities, saving lives, and shaping futures. ★



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A Brief History of Civil Air Patrol in the Las Vegas Valley

By 1st Lt Dallas M. Uonites

The Las Vegas Squadron (LVS) has had a varied history, especially during the Second World War, where it was utilized within the Greater Las Vegas Valley.

LVS was activated to search for a missing aircraft that left Tonopah, assisted in searches for missing persons and aircraft, and assisted training missions provided by the B-17 and B-25 Gunnery School at the Las Vegas Army Airfield (now Nellis AFB), the home of the 82d Flying Training Wing.

Nevada was considered almost ideal for aerial training. The state is 109,802 square miles and the 1940 census recorded 110,247 residents — 48th of 48 states in the lowest number of residents. At the time, Las Vegas boasted a population of 8,422 — and there were only 16,414 in all of Clark County.

Las Vegas Army Airfield was the first of the new flexible gunnery schools to begin accepting its first students in December 1941. Army Air Forces Gunnery Schools were World War II organizations for training personnel in the skill of aerial gunnery. "Flexible Gunnery" training developed diverse skills for various aircraft and differing positions within bombers, e.g., waist gunner, rear gunner, etc. The first B-17 Flying Fortresses arrived in 1942 and allowed the training of 600 gunnery students and 215 co-pilots from the field every five weeks at the height of the war. More than 45,000 B-17 gunners were trained.

Las Vegas Squadron was also activated on another mission, which was the second activation of the unit, to search for another aircraft that was reported missing in Southern Nevada. Before this activation, the unit was activated and provided outstanding service to the Utah Wing. This was an unusual search as the unit was searching for the aircraft in bad weather during extremely dangerous terrain.

The most entertaining mission of LVS was its use as a bond bomber in 1945. The squadron "bombed" the greater Las Vegas Valley with bond leaflets, which were used to fund the war. Not only did the pilots "bomb" their communities, but they were "bond-bombing" their communities to the tune of air raid sirens. One could only imagine the thrill of taking part in a unique opportunity during the Second World War.

In July 1945, training under regular army instructors, 14 Nevada Wing Civil Air Patrol cadets completed a two-week course at Las Vegas army airfield. Instruction on basic deflection and the moving base and small arms was the first day's program. The second day included chemical warfare, crash procedure, and interphone training. The week also included communications, military drill, and parachute training. Simulated flying training and practice for the weekly military review. The highlight of the training was

2—RENO EVENING GAZETTE August 3, 1945



CIVIL AIR PATROL CADETS AT LAS VEGAS

These Nevada civil air patrol cadets, pictured with two CAP officers, have just completed a two-week training program at Las Vegas army air field, conducted as the regular army cadet course. Back row, left to right, are James Smith, Boulder; Kenneth Carpenter, Reno; Albert Schouten, Las Vegas; F. C. Martin, Boulder; Donald Steinberg, Reno; Richard Barnette, Las Vegas; Robert Chambers, Las Vegas; and Capt. J. K. Henderson, Reno. Front row, left to right, Jesse Jenkins and Richard Wiseman, Reno; Frank Homme, Boulder; Frank Page, Reno; Harry North, Boulder; William Wolverton, Reno; and Lt. W. H. Kelsey, Las Vegas.



an orientation flight on a B-24 bomber, during which cadets operate intercommunication phones and explanation of bombing and aerial protection. A briefing on control tower operations, weather mapping and reading, and use of weather instruments and forecasting.

Although the squadron was utilized for unique activities during the war, it also persevered through its challenges. The Las Vegas Squadron and the Las Vegas provisional mounted troop were both disbanded in December 1942 for reasons beyond its control, as many members were called into service for their country. Maj. Eugene Howell, Nevada Wing Commander, felt it was imperative that recruiting and organizing new CAP units in Southern Nevada, including Basic townsites and Boulder City continue. "Southern Nevada is the scene of heavy air traffic and many war activities which demand the support of an active, efficient Civil Air Patrol organization. It is vital that we plan now to recruit and organize at least an air squadron, a mounted squadron, and a motorized unit in that area."

The Las Vegas Squadron has had a colorful history and one that continually evolved and persevered. The squadron lived by the Civil Air Patrol Core Values of Integrity, Volunteer Service, Excellence, and Respect. The Las Vegas Squadron provided volunteer service not only for its community but for the war efforts that led the nation to victory. The Las Vegas Squadron provided excellence by provided outstanding service to another wing in need. The Las Vegas Squadron was the epitome of the Southern Nevada Squadron and helped to evolve into the Las Vegas Valley Squadron as they are today. ★

The Washoe Jeep Squadron: A Lasting Legacy

Cadet Capt. Aaron Goff

When people discuss Nevada Wing's 80-year history, many think of the actions each of our great squadrons had undertaken in search and rescue, volunteer service, and flight training. Without one of Nevada's oldest squadrons and their legacy, Nevada Wing wouldn't be the same as it stands today. Nevada Wing's 80th anniversary has sparked a new appreciation for what the Civil Air Patrol has accomplished over the years, now is the perfect time to commemorate the legendary actions of the men and women of the Washoe Jeep Squadron. During World War II, Nevada Wing assembled the Washoe Jeep Squadron's predecessor, the Mechanized Unit to assist the air searches. The difficult terrain combined with the notoriously harsh weather of the Sierra Nevada mountains often made air searches and rescues impossible. But it would not be enough to simply locate a downed aircraft by air. If a pilot and/or crew had survived the crash, most probably it would be necessary to get to them with medical aid and bring them out. Helicopters were still undergoing development at the time, and therefore unavailable. Nevada Wing found a solution, with members offering their 4x4 off-road vehicles to aid mission efforts. After years of service, this Mechanized Unit was disbanded at the conclusion of the war. However, the need for ground support didn't disappear. So, in 1950 the Washoe Jeep Squadron, based in Reno, was founded. Wanting to help others in their hours of need, "The Jeeps" still faced the huge challenges of conducting search and rescue missions over Nevada's vast and mountainous terrain. As this solution continued to evolve, the Washoe Jeep Squadron soon had an entire fleet of these vehicles. Within record time, The Jeeps became the centerpiece of Nevada's ground search and rescue forces. In only a few years, the squadron had become so well-established in the surrounding community,



that it rose to over 40 members and 18 all-terrain Jeeps. The squadron hit the ground running with several important mission successes only mere months after their creation. In 1951, it mobilized after reports came in of a missing glider in Southern Nevada. The glider belonged to Swedish air scientist Karl Ovgard, who had endured a severe crash well outside the range of any airport. Rushing into action, the Jeep Squadron began one of the biggest ground searches undertaken by any CAP unit. Searching from Death Valley to the Amargosa Desert and onto the Panamint Valley, the search team gave the mission their fullest efforts. With the search finally ending with the discovery of the downed glider, the members of the Washoe Jeep Squadron had covered over 10,000 miles solely in their Jeeps. With the sheer speed and



size of this ground search, the Jeep Squadron quickly built up a reputation among the Civil Air Patrol and Air Force. With signs only pointing to the Jeep Squadron getting bigger and bolder in their rescue missions, it was recognized as one of the finest civilian search teams in the nation. While the squadron had done everything from saving flash-flood victims to finding missing children, The Jeeps engaged in much more than just search and rescue. They were well known around their community for their regular civic work and nature preservation. It was never out of the ordinary for the squadron members to transport feed to herds of wild animals, restore and maintain mountain trails, or help the local disability support groups. Whenever they were not training in search and rescue, they jumped on every opportu-



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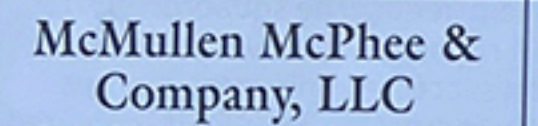


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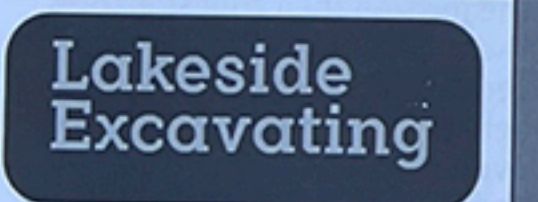


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success, saving lives, and the betterment of the community. With the loss of an important and legendary group of service members, a question arose: "Who will carry on their legacy?" Today, we as members of Civil Air Patrol's Nevada Wing need to ensure the legacy of the Washoe Jeep Squadron is not forgotten. We are making sure to carry on the traditions of the Washoe Jeep Squadron by teaching our members life lessons and instilling the core values that can be learned from these brave men and women. I strongly encourage you to do the same and carry on their legacy. By living as they did through embracing a service lifestyle and Civil Air Patrol's core values, we can continue to make lasting impacts on Nevada's communities. ★

nity to give back to their communities in some way or another. Squadron members were avid about promoting safety and well-being around the entire state as well. Regularly, the squadron would assemble to teach the students and other citizens basic first aid and help others gain medical qualifications. All of this goes to show that all the members of the Jeep Squadron were successful in their goal of leaving the surrounding community in better condition than they found it. With everyone around recognizing the need for this squadron's dedication to service leadership, the Jeep Squadron established itself as a community cornerstone. Although The Jeeps had well over 60 members and the whole community's support at its peak, they disbanded in 2014. The Jeeps left behind a timeless legacy of dedication toward



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The Sagebrush Triangle Search

By Maj. Thomas Cooper Spring 2011
Revised 9/25/21 Capt. Jeanne Murphy

30 January - 5 February 1978 Mission number RRC 8-103/110/112 /115. Six days that taxed the Nevada Wing and Civil Air Patrol like no others. Total losses, two O-2 Cessna Skymasters, one civilian Piper Warrior, one air force helicopter UH-1N, five people were killed, six people were injured.

The Sagebrush Triangle is a roughly triangular shaped area of mountainous terrain going to about 9000 feet near Mt. Charleston. The area seems to have acquired its nickname after the more famous and ominous Bermuda Triangle. During these six days it earned that name.

The mission began on 30 January 1978 when a O-2A Cessna Skymaster call sign Spar 14 launched on a planned Red Flag Forward Air Control mission for a flight of F-4 Phantoms. The mission launched VFR at Monahan AFB, AZ and Capt. Victor Vellelunga from Bergstrom AFB, TX. Radar Contact was lost 5 minutes after the last radio contact and when they missed their 1445 check in, the air and ground search began.

On day two of the mission Nevada Wing mobilized with assistance from California Wing. A SAR base in a trailer was opened and a Command Post on Nellis AFB opened. Lt. Col. Doris North, Deputy Commander Nevada Wing CAP, was the Mission Coordinator. The Air Force contributed a HC-130 Hercules, Huey UN-IN, HH 53Super Jolly Green Giant Helicopters, more O-2 Skymasters and OV-10 Broncos. The Civil Air Patrol had at peak 13 aircraft from NV and 16 from CA. During day 2 there were no findings.

Day three was uneventful with no findings. Efforts were continued by the Civil Air Patrol and USAF with the above assets in play. Contributing to the difficulty of the search was the vast emptiness of the Southwest desert and high terrain.

Day four found the search continuing. Separate from the search Lt. Col. Jimmy Helton and his son Michael took off in a Piper Warrior to look for camp sites over Charleston. The owner of the aircraft reported it missing and Nellis was informed about 1445 pm that day. The search was expanded.

Also, during day four, aerial photography was being utilized. During the evening the photographs were

'Sagebrush Triangle' Crashes Probed

By JEFF ADLER
SUN Staff Writer

What caused three airplanes and one helicopter to crash in the same area in the space of one week?

That's the question confronting both military and civilian aviation disaster investigators while searchers comb the "sagebrush triangle" for its last victim, an Air Force pilot missing since Jan. 30.

Final totals still aren't in, but it stacks up this way:

• Four men are dead, five were injured, one is still missing and one man survived the ordeal by hiking through mountainous terrain for two days before being found by searchers;

• A helicopter, two military planes and a private plane all crashed within 10 miles of one another within a five-day period.

Hundreds of military personnel as well as police search and rescue teams participated in the search concentrated in an area surrounding Mount Charleston that came to be known as the "sagebrush triangle," after the infamous Bermuda Triangle, because of its high aircraft mortality rate.

Although crash investigators have

just began their inquiry into the chain of crashes, several theories have already surfaced. None imparts any special or "mysterious" circumstances to the crashes.

Lt. Frank Kim, commander of Metro's special operations bureau, which routinely searches for downed aircraft, said he believes the three crashes happening together was a coincidence.

"That particular area is very hazardous for light aircraft," Kim said. "My

guess is that the crashes were caused by severe down drafts."

Kim explained that air currents follow the curvature of the earth. In mountainous terrain the currents whip around and are unpredictable. He said that phenomenon is called clear air turbulence.

One Air Force official agreed with Lt. Kim's assessment. "It's a pretty fair guess that it was down drafts," Maj. Jerry Broening, Nellis Air Force Base public information officer, said.

"If you've ever flown in a light plane in the mountains you'd know," Broening said. "Flying in mountains is inherently dangerous."

Broening also said that mechanical failure couldn't be ruled out as a cause of the crashes.

He said the Air Force would be convening three separate accident boards to determine the cause of each crash.

"They'll take those engines apart and find out if they were running when the plane hit and what angle the plane hit at," Broening said.

He also suggested that pilot error might have been a factor in the crashes.

A pilot might have become disoriented in the mountains.

A third theory purports that each plane's wings iced up during the flight over the mountains, interrupting the air flow over its wings, causing it to crash.

In any case, it will be months before both the Air Force and the Federal Aviation Administration have finished their investigations and release their findings. *L. U. Sun feb 10 feb*

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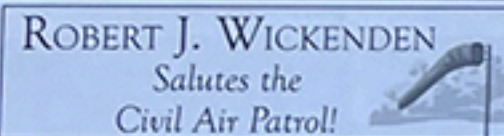
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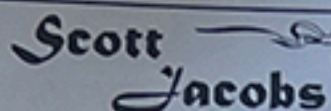
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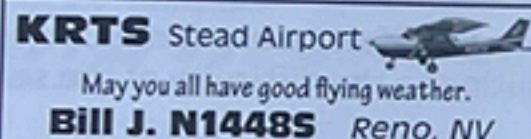
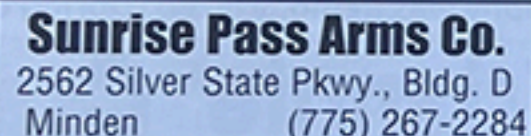
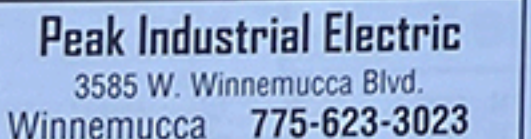
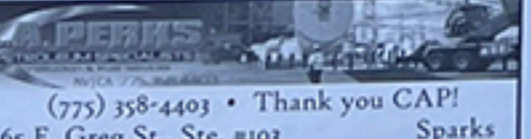
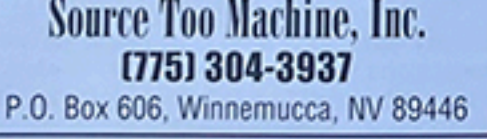
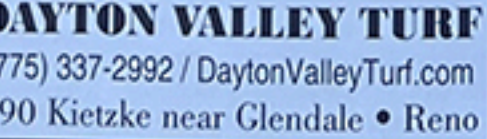
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assessed, and potential target areas were chosen. The next day flights were planned for those areas.

On Day five, Capt. Lawrence K. Wilson from the 27th Tactical Air Support Squadron at Bergstrom AFB and Capt. Vergene Johnson from the 23rd TAS Squadron at Davis-Monthan AFB launched in support of the search in an O-2A Skymaster. They checked in at 0759 and called in search area at 0814. At 0900 they checked in. At 0910 they missed a radio call and at 0930 they missed check in. The search was again expanded. After this loss all O-2's in the search were grounded until a safety check could be completed.

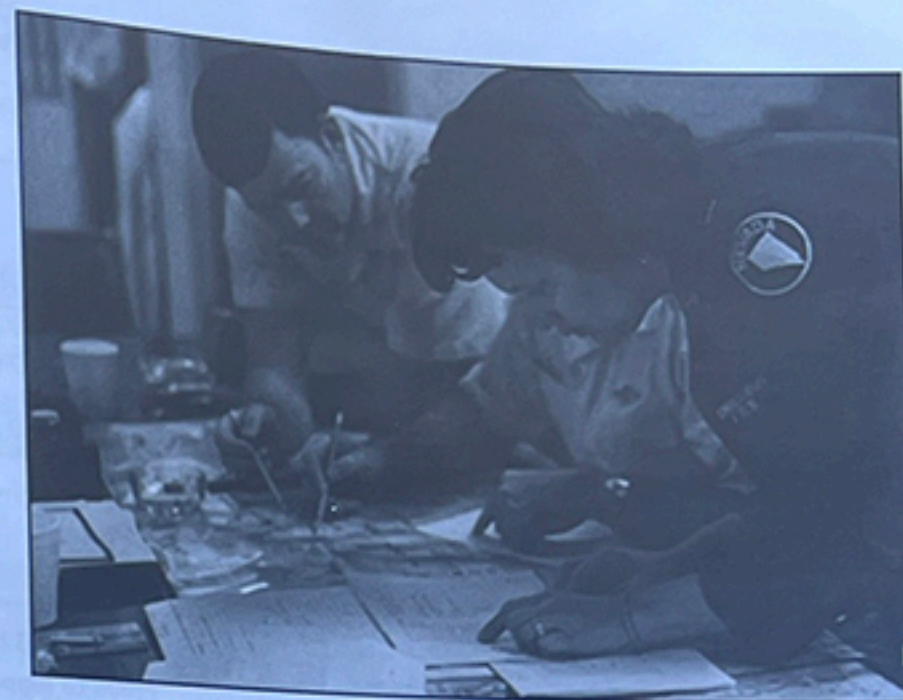
Day six found ground teams from Clark County Sheriffs SAR team out on the mountain side. This team located the O-2 from day five at 8000 feet in a box canyon. Two helicopters were launched in response. While the search team was active in the area, Lt. Col. Jimmy Helton walked up to them. He had been wandering in the desert for two days seeking help. He saw the activity and approached. He was evacuated by one of the helicopters. The second helicopter began trying to track the Lt. Col.'s footprints in the snow. It crashed. The helicopter was located the same day with all five crew members alive with various injuries.

Later in day six the first OV-2A was located. Only one crew member was found. He was deceased. It was found by a blood hound team from Nellis AFB. The Pilot remained missing. CAP had suspended the search post the Huey crash. Michael Belton's remains were recovered 6 Feb 1978.

After the search was suspended 22 February 1978 Maj. Jim Coombs, commander of the Nellis AFB Survival Training Squadron - and member of Clark County Composite Squadron CAP, took his personnel in to the crash site and did a line search. The remains of the pilot of the first OV-2A were located under a bush away from the aircraft.

The Nevada and California Wings contributed 29 aircraft, 87 sorties, 86 seniors and 7 cadets to the search. In total 3 aircraft were located, 1 survivor, 6 deceased, 6 Air Force members injured. The USAF provided 21 aircraft and approximately 20 more were provided by the Nye County and Clark County Sheriff's Departments. The total number of sorties was 240.

Members still active in 2021, Capt. Robert Furtek and Maj. Gary Coleman both members of the Nellis Senior Squadron and who both are 50-year members. ★



Lt. Col. Doris North, Deputy Nevada Wing Commander, in the command center at Nellis Air Force Base.)

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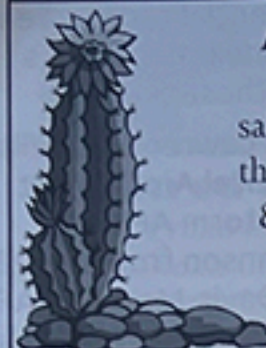
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Let Me Tell You A Story

By Valerie Scheuering

Let me tell you a story. I was born in 1959 in Reno, NV. I never realized that my mother's life would have a profound influence on mine, but it did. To tell you mine, I must begin with hers.

In 1953 my mother, Paula Drulias, and her sister, Ina-Jean Drulias, joined the Nevada Wing of the Civil Air Patrol (CAP) while attending Reno High School.

My mom attended her first summer encampment (as a sophomore) at March AFB CA, her second in 1954 at Mather AFB CA, her third in 1955 at Nellis A.F.B., NV. Paula's CAP squadron visited Fallon N.A.S for a breakfast fly-in as a 1Lt Cadet Commander. She attended the National Encampment in 1955 for female cadets (one of two selected). She was then selected to represent the Nevada Wing of the Civil Air Patrol, along with five other cadets, to the National Encampment for a special training session at Lackland AFB, TX.

I know you are thinking, where am I going with this? Well, because of my mother's experience, I decided to enroll in the JROTC program at Reno High School and upon graduation joined the U.S. Air Force and went through Basic Training at Lackland AFB, TX. My mom and I were able to talk about her experience in the Civil Air Patrol and I in turn shared my experiences with her. We talked about the changes at Lackland and the things that hadn't changed. I had no idea until we talked, that the CAP was the auxiliary of the U.S. Air Force.

So now you have an understanding of the women who influenced my life, my mom and my aunt. I am now the 1st Vice Commander of The American Legion, Department of Nevada, all because my mom encouraged me to join the U.S. Air Force. I wish they could both be here to see, but I know they'd be proud of what I've accomplished.

Here's wishing the Nevada Wing of the Civil Air Patrol a Happy 80th Birthday and to another 80+ Years!



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The Legacy of Geraldine "Jerry" Hardman Jordan: A Nevada Wing Tressure

By Cadet 1st Lt. Luz A. Sandoval



Who am I? What do I want to accomplish in life? Can I really accomplish what I want even with so many hurdles in my way? Do these questions sound familiar? These are questions many young and grown adults ask themselves every day. Every day, we wonder what the end goal is for our lives and what destiny is ours to fulfill. The answer to these questions became apparent one day in 1927, to a young girl named Geraldine "Jerry" Hardman, who would one day become one of Nevada Wing's Treasures as a famed World War II Women Airforce Service Pilot (WASP).

Geraldine was born in 1922 and grew up in Reno, Nevada. She was only five years old when she knew exactly what she wanted out of her life. While news spread that Charles Lindberg successfully embarked on a flight across the Atlantic ocean, she looked at the skies above and spoke the famed words "That's what I want to do."

At 15, she worked countless hours, days, and months to get her flight journey started. She also knew the importance of her grades and often made the semester honor roll at Reno High and graduated early to fill the position of Secretary for the President of the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR). Without these efforts, she would not have gotten the chance to participate in UNR's Civil Pilot Training Program. By luck, only 19 slots were filled by the male applicants on campus, so she filled the last slot. Through the program, she achieved her Private Pilot's license in 1939.

In 1941, the United States entered World War II, and immediately after the events of Pearl Harbor, Jacqueline Cochrane pulled together a group of female pilots to fly for the British Air Transport Auxiliary when the United States Air Army Corps rejected them. A year later, Nancy Harkness Love, guided the first 25 pilots into the new Women's Auxillary Ferrying Squadron (WAFS) as part of the Women's Army Corps (WAC). Both Cochrane and Gen. Henry "Hap" Arnold were convinced WAFS could not supply enough pilots for the war effort and were not supportive of female pilots entering the WAC because of the limitations on its female pilots. So in that same month that WAFS was formed, Cochrane established the Women's Flying Training Detachment (WFTD). It was a huge step for female pilots since the pilots in the WFTD did more than just transport aircraft, they also played a huge role in testing and checking new planes. Eventually, on August 5th, 1943, the WAFS and WFTD merged into WASP and this is where Geraldine comes back into the picture.



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We are proud to salute and be a part of the many fine efforts of the men and women in the Civil Air Patrol for their lifesaving missions. Thanks and good luck!



The war effort called on experienced female pilots to help support the fight. Jerry found herself in the fifth class for WASP training in Sweetwater, Texas. The training was so rigorous, that many of the women washed out; only 1,047 women graduated out of the 25,000 that applied. Geraldine was persistent and focused. She made a name for herself as she and her friends endured over 22 weeks of elite training. Her graduation in 1943 marked a historic day as it led her and her classmates to begin the journey as some of the first female service pilots.

The journey for WASP pilots was never easy and soon enough the arrangement with the US Army Air Forces ended on December 20, 1944. By that time, Jerry had flown just about everything from Douglas C-47 transports to B-25 "Mitchell" bombers. She eventually resigned from WASP when she became pregnant with her first child but went on to become a member of the Civil Air Patrol's Reno Air Squadron (now Reno Composite Squadron) and supported the local Ninety-Nines chapter.

It was beyond anything for the female WASP pilots to experience going through rough training, enduring constant doubt, biased treatment, and even giving the ultimate sacrifice. When WASP disbanded, they did so with little recognition or fanfare. It was not until the early 1970's that the WASPs would be recognized as veterans and be awarded for their service. In 2010, the WASP pilots were awarded the Congressional Gold Medal as a way to make things right. More than 200 WASPs attended the event, many of them wearing their World War II-era uniforms.

Through my research into her life, and understanding her struggles, I have gained knowledge beyond my years. What she was able to accomplish despite her male counterparts and the military telling her she could not simply because she was female is empowering as both a young female pilot and as a fellow Nevada Wing Member. She knew what her goal was at such a young age and never let anything stop her from reaching her dream. Along the way, she paved a path for future generations of all aviators, both male, and female, sending a message to let our passions be strong. I hope by sharing her story, we as members of the Civil Air Patrol can continue to represent and pay forward what pilots like Jerry gave to us today. She continues to inspire and motivate pilots as they push through their challenges so to live their dream.

If you have yet not answered the question of who you are or what your destiny is, just by simply giving your life every single ounce of effort you have, you can accomplish so many things no matter who thinks you can't. Jerry's legacy lives on through us and now it's time to create our own.

Sources: <https://www.airspacemag.com/military-aviation/flying-bombers-in-world-war-ii-1348897/>
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Reno Evening Gazette • 9/15/1943



'WASP' FLIER

Miss Geraldine Hardman of Reno was graduated as a woman pilot Saturday with the fifth class at Avenger field, Sweetwater, Tex. Saturday's graduation ceremony was the first since official designation of the army's women fliers as "WASPs" (women's airforce service pilots). She will be assigned to non-combat flying duty with the air forces.

Miss Hardman is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. George Hardman of 752 West street, and attended Reno high school and the University of Nevada. She was secretary to the president of the university before joining the WASPs. Her brother, Lieut. (jg) George Hardman of the naval air corps is missing in action.



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NEVADA WING



The Heart of Volunteers: Wing Serves Communities Beyond Its Borders

Capt. Maryan Tooker of the Nevada Wing sews masks for distribution during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Nevada Wing has worked to serve the state's residents since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Through a renewed relationship with the state Department of Emergency Management, wing members answered the call to deliver much-needed personal protective equipment and food to numerous towns and Native American tribes. Nevada is over 110,000 square miles in size, with vast areas of desolate, open desert between towns and tribes, presenting a substantial challenge to reach remote communities.

Wing members manufactured some 1,045 face masks for distribution throughout the state and beyond Nevada's boundaries, including the Navajo Nation, Rosebud Indian Reservation, and needy families in Oregon. Tyrone Begay, chapter planner for the Chinle Community of the Navajo Nation, said, "We needed to determine how best to help our community and in doing so a request for masks came about ... through these contributions, we were able to provide masks for local elders in the community first ... soon we were able to give to anyone in need. The number of masks donated was a godsend ...

thank you very much for the care, compassion, and willingness to help."

Assisted living facilities were hit hard by the virus; 100 hand-sewn masks were delivered to elderly residents in Reno. Southern Nevada wing members also distributed supplies to people in need.

People in crisis received not only protective materials and food but also the critical knowledge that others care. "The Nevada Wing is proud of its contributions to the well-being of our state and beyond, standing ready to assist whenever and however we can," said Col. Deborah Pierce, wing commander.

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