

Sept. 2020



PHOENIX RISING

VOL. 4 NO. 2 U.S. ARMY RECRUITING BN, PHOENIX

WWW.GOARMY.COM

Phoenix Recruiting Battalion welcomes Oliveira



GLENDALE, Ariz. – The Phoenix Recruiting Battalion welcomed new commander Lt. Col. Brandon Oliveira, following a change of command ceremony at the Glendale Public Library, Glendale, Ariz., July 16.

Oliveira replaced outgoing commander Lt. Col. Scott Morley, who had led the battalion since July 2018. Oliveira's most recent assignment was U.S. Special Operations representative to the U.S. Ambassador at the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo.

Morley will retire from the Army in the coming months, following 20 years of service, the majority of it spent in Special Forces.

Glendale Mayor Jerry Weirs, a long-time advocate of the Army's recruiting efforts, served as master of ceremonies for the event held in the library's auditorium, which was socially distanced due to the current COVID-19 pandemic. ***(continued next page)***

Phoenix Recruiting Battalion welcomes Oliveira (cont.)

Overseeing the ceremony virtually was Col. La' Tonya Jordan, commander, 5th Recruiting Brigade, United States Recruiting Command, who praised Morley for his contributions to the battalion during his tenure in command.

"As the commander of the Phoenix battalion, he has been instrumental in achieving over 6500 regular Army and Army Reserve contracts," Jordan said. "Through his ability to build a cohesive team, the battalion's community partnerships stand as one of the strongest networks in all of the Army's Recruiting Command."

Jordan said the battalion is gaining a superb leader in Oliveira, who is ready to take the responsibility of leading the recruiting mission.

In his farewell speech, Morley thanked everyone who helped make his two years at the battalion successful and said the organization had made tremendous strides during his time as commander.

"To the men and women of Phoenix Battalion – those remarkably resilient Soldiers, Civilians and Families, you are what make this battalion great," Morley said.

"You are the ones beating the streets, the telephone lines and the social media space overcoming decades-old assumptions about the military and service in the U.S. Army, successfully getting young men and woman, and their families, to listen."

"You are the ones who made that magic happen. Every number you hear today is a testament to a life that you have changed. Thank you for your support and motivation you brought to our mission each and every day."

In his acceptance of command remarks, Oliveira said he was humbled by the opportunity to lead the Phoenix Recruiting Battalion.

"The privilege of command is not lost on me and I am truly grateful for the opportunity," Oliveira said.

Oliveira stressed the importance of the local community as the key to the success in the battalion's recruiting efforts.

"The mission of the Phoenix Battalion is a community effort," Oliveira said. "I look forward to being a part of that team."



Incoming Phoenix Recruiting Battalion commander Lt. Col. Brandon Oliveira (center), holds the battalion guidon, having assumed command from Lt. Col. Scott Morley (left), during a change of command ceremony, July 16, Glendale Public Library, Glendale, Ariz. Observing is Command Sgt. Maj. Hilda Garcia (right), command sergeant major, Phx. Rec. Bn., the senior noncommissioned officer for the battalion. (Photo by Mike Scheck, USAREC Public Affairs)

Anthem recruiter exemplifies warrior ethos through family

Story by Alun Thomas, U.S. Army Recruiting BN-Phoenix



Sgt. Jesse Thurman (right) is pictured with his wife Natalea and five of his children, May, 2016. Thurman, now a staff sergeant, now serves as a recruiter for Anthem Recruiting Station, Phoenix North Recruiting Company, Phoenix Recruiting Battalion. (Courtesy Photo)

ANTHEM, Ariz. – As the Army seeks to hire 10,000 new Soldiers during the first National Hiring Days, June 30-July 2, one recruiter will be working tirelessly to add to that number.

After 10 years of service, Staff Sgt. Jesse Thurman, recruiter, Anthem Recruiting Station, Phoenix North Recruiting Company, has found his niche, helping provide the Army with its next generation of Soldiers and leaders.

Thurman has had an eventful career to date, serving in such diverse locations as Germany, Afghanistan and Kuwait, preparing him for his current assignment as a recruiter.

Thurman’s path to the Army began at high school, when he was part of the Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC) program, which he initially hoped would lead to enlisting.

Unfortunately it didn’t turn out as planned for Thurman.

“I was part of the JROTC program during the first two years of high school, this initially piqued my interest in the Army,” Thurman said. “I ended up not following through with my plan of joining after graduation and looking back I wished I had.” ***(continued next page)***

Anthem recruiter exemplifies warrior ethos (cont.)

Instead Thurman graduated from Plantation High School, Plantation, Fla., in 2001 and tried both automotive vocational school and community college. By 2009 however, Thurman realized he needed to make a change for himself and his family, wife Natalea, and three children, Alexia, Noah and Hazel.

“In 2009 my interest in the Army was reignited when I realized that the Army could help provide me with additional benefits that could help both me and my family,” Thurman explained. “At that time I was married with three kids and medical insurance was very expensive. From the first moment that I spoke to my wife about joining she was 100 percent supportive and is still that way to this day.”

Thurman stepped into his local recruiting station intending to inquire about the Army Reserve, but soon had his mind changed after learning what active duty could offer.

“After going over all the different benefits and opportunities, I switched and chose the active duty Army route. I was 26 when I started the process in September of 2009,” Thurman continued. “Because of the winter break I ended up shipping to basic training in January of 2010 at 27 years old. My wife actually stopped her schooling when we moved to Germany and she was very close to becoming an RN (registered nurse).”

Thurman enlisted to become an M1 Armor Crewman, graduating from One Station Unit Training at Fort Knox, Ky., in 2010, before moving to his first duty station in Grafenwoehr, Germany, with his family, now comprised of four children.

“I had some catching up to do ... my youngest (son, Abrams) was born three months before I shipped to basic training,” Thurman said. “We absolutely loved being in Germany and would go back in a heartbeat. I got the chance to travel around Europe and soaked up as much history as I could.”

Thurman deployed to Afghanistan while in Germany, gaining valuable experience in combat, before moving to Fort Benning, Ga.

“At Fort Benning I was assigned as a tank gunner, which in my opinion is the most fun job on the tank because you get to squeeze the trigger on a 120mm gun,” Thurman explained. “During my second time qualifying on our tank at Benning we earned the right to brag because we had the highest score and were named the Top Tank Crew for my battalion.”

Thurman then moved to Fort Riley, Kansas, where he served as a tank commander and deployed once again, this time to Kuwait.

“In Kuwait we trained the Kuwaiti Army on basic infantry tactics. After returning from Kuwait I really got to expand on my position as a tank commander,” he continued. “We did a lot of training on our tanks which helped me gain more knowledge. During the winter of 2016 my crew scored the highest score in our squadron during tank qualifying.”

Thurman suffered a setback when he failed to complete the Abrams Master Gunner’s Course in 2017, following a period of intense training.

“Unfortunately I was not successful when I attended that school –however, God had a different plan for me,” Thurman said. “God has helped with my disappointment from this minor setback and I’ve been able to use this learning experience as extra motivation to better myself. I am eager to start the course again when my recruiting time is over.”

Thurman’s next stop was the Phoenix Recruiting Battalion, where he was assigned to the Anthem Station in 2017.

Anthem recruiter exemplifies warrior ethos (cont.)

“Recruiting has definitely been one of the most challenging assignments in my career so far. I have had to overcome a few personal challenges, like public speaking. I have never enjoyed speaking in front of crowds but as a recruiter that is an every-day thing,” he added.

Thurman and his wife have added to their family with two more children, sons Zachary and Jesse Jr., which has been a blessing for him.

“Another benefit of recruiting is I have been able to spend more quality time with my family. I actually extended my recruiting time for one year because it allows my kids to benefit from Arizona’s homeschool benefits,” Thurman said.

Thurman said he sees only positives, as he moves into the second half of his Army career.

“I see my Army future being very bright ... I've only been in for 10 years and I feel I have at least another 10 years in my Army career,” he stated. “I’m currently on track to get promoted during my time as a recruiter and this will ensure that I continue to move forward.”

Recruiting has also given Thurman more time to finally focus on his college education, as he’s completed more classes in the past two years than in the prior 8 years.

None of this would have been possible without his wife’s support, Thurman said, the key to his success.



“I’ve been married to Natalea since April of 2006. Without her support I would not have been able to achieve everything that I have so far in my Army career,” Thurman said. “She always helps me to stay organized when I plan training for my Soldiers. She reminds me to stay focused on the task at hand; all while raising and homeschooling our six kids.”

Sierra Vista recruiter returns home to answer Army call

Story by Alun Thomas, U.S. Army Recruiting BN-Phoenix

SIERRA VISTA, Ariz. – From an early age it seemed the influence of the Army was always present around Staff Sgt. Abraham Camacho.

His father once served with the Mexican Army, instilling a sense of discipline and purpose in him as a young child.

As he grew older, many of the civilians he worked with were veterans, all with a wealth of experience, knowledge and values Camacho found admirable.

Finally in 2015 he decided to take the leap and enlist, a decision he hasn't looked back from since.

Camacho, a native of Flagstaff, Ariz., moved to Sierra Vista at a young age and grew up there, in close proximity to Fort Huachuca.



“I grew up and did my K-12 Education all in Sierra Vista public schools. My father is a general contractor and I would work with him doing construction during the summers and after high school,” Camacho said. “Following high school, I went to Cochise College and The University of Arizona.”

The influence of the Army loomed over Camacho during this period, with his father, the fellow veterans he knew and nearby Fort Huachuca all streaming into his consciousness.

“While working as a lab manager for Cisco Systems, I worked with a lot of prior service Army Veterans,” he said. “Some were making six figure salaries with no college degrees and skills they learned from the Army.”

Knowing it was now or never, Camacho went to the Sierra Vista Recruiting Station and decided to enlist, despite holding a valuable civilian job.

“I was 26 years old and a college graduate when I joined ... I was working for a major network company doing DoD (Department of Defense) Unified Capabilities Approved Products List testing for networking equipment,” Camacho added. “I worked with lots of people who had gained their skills through the Army and were applying them. I would look at Soldiers in my hometown and think 'what do they have that I don't?' So I joined.” ***(continued next page)***

Sierra Vista recruiter returns home to answer Army call (cont.)

Camacho enlisted as an infantryman, deciding to choose a profession that defines the Army's history.

"I chose this job, because to me it is what truly being a Soldier means," Camacho explained. "When you see movies or think of things that Soldiers do most often, it's the infantry Soldier that is depicted."

This military occupational specialty allowed Camacho to experience a diverse range of opportunities over the ensuing years, all of which helped him progress through the ranks in various leadership positions.

"Through hard work and an opportunity afforded to me after enlistment, I was offered Airborne School and to become a paratrooper (with the 82nd Airborne Division)," Camacho said. "I worked in every

position in a line infantry battalion, from rifleman to being a team leader. I also worked as an infantry scout platoon leader and as a dismounted reconnaissance troop team leader."

In 2017, Camacho deployed to Mosul, Iraq, in support of Operation Inherent Resolve and earned the Combat Infantryman Badge, before being assigned to United States Recruiting Command in 2019.

It was a homecoming of sorts for Camacho, who after being placed with the Phoenix Recruiting Battalion, was assigned to Sierra Vista Recruiting Station, where he had enlisted four years back

"Over the last year I've been helping young men and women of the community that I came from, become Soldiers within this organization," he continued. "It's been a challenge, but has also been very rewarding. I have been fortunate enough to change many young people's lives."

For Camacho, the future is clear – he intends to make the Army his career for the foreseeable future.

"My future in the Army is to finish my recruiting obligation and to pursue a career in special operations," Camacho said. "As of now, I plan on making the Army a career and retiring with my beautiful wife Francesca."



Former Airman swaps uniforms for Army recruiting duty

Story by Alun Thomas, U.S. Army Recruiting BN-Phoenix

MESA, Ariz. – When Sgt. Eric Frias entered civilian life following eight years in the Air Force, there was a part of him that instantly missed the brotherhood and camaraderie of serving.

He recalled his time serving alongside the U.S. Army during his second deployment to Iraq, having grown accustomed to their way of life and developing a love for it.

In his mind there was no question what branch he would join when he decided to rejoin the military, enlisting in the Army, where he currently serves as a recruiter for Mesa Recruiting Station, Tempe Recruiting Company.

Frias, a native of Methuen, Mass., is a first generation American, born to immigrants from the Dominican Republic, who moved to the U.S. in the 1970's.

Frias grew up attending Lawrence High School, where he excelled at baseball, before deciding his future lay elsewhere.

“Lawrence is a predominately Latino community with about 70 percent of its population being Hispanic,” Frias said. “Growing up I had a passion for baseball and played it from the age of 5 to 18. I was captain of my high school baseball team. After high school I studied one year at the University of Massachusetts Lowell, before deciding to join the United States Air Force.”

Frias said he decided to join the Air Force in 2004 because of two cousins who were serving in the branch, a decision that led to his 8 years of initial service and two deployments to Iraq.

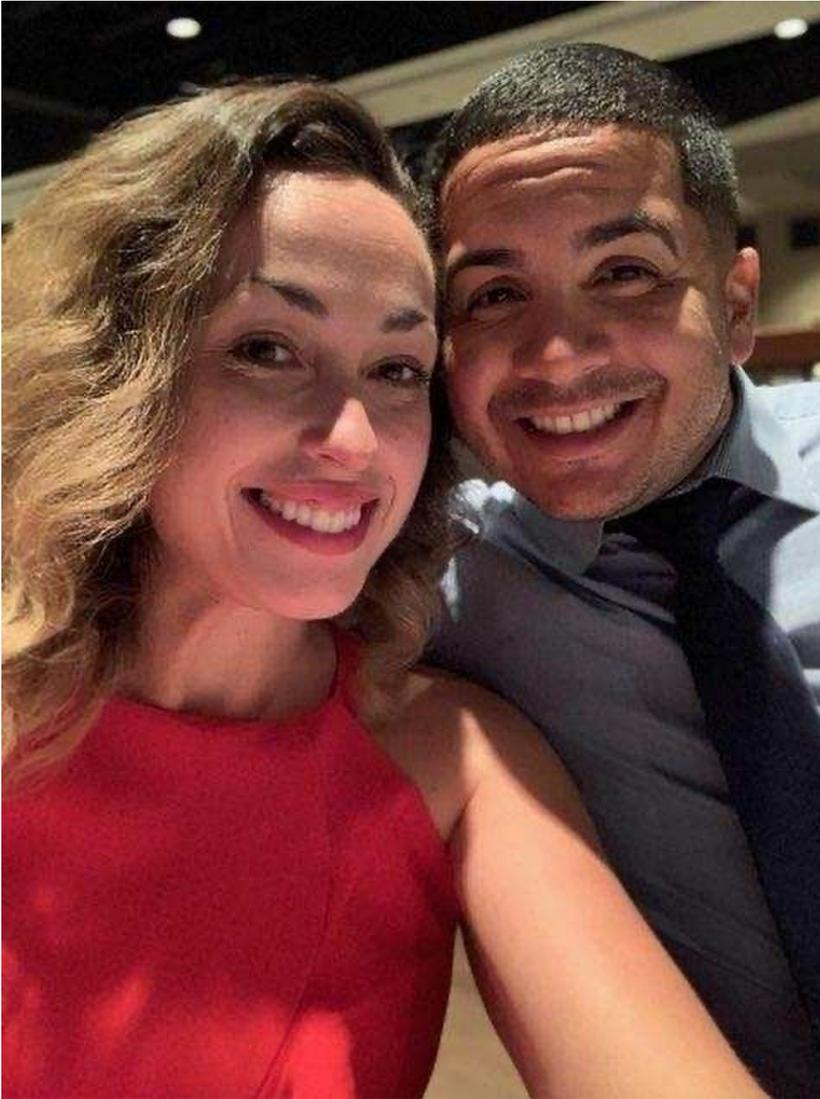
During his second deployment, Frias was attached to the 89th Military Police Brigade, Fort Hood, Texas, where he was able to see Army operations on a daily basis. It was a portent for the future, as Frias left the military.

“After I got out of the Air Force I had a break in service of 3 years. I started a family and tested the waters of the civilian sector, where I was a state employee for the Massachusetts Department of Youth Services,” he said.

Missing the military constantly weighed on Frias' mind however and it wasn't long before he walked into an Army recruiting station and reenlisted at the age of 31 in 2016. **(continued next page)**



Former Airman swaps uniforms for Army recruiting duty (cont.)



“I remembered my time with the Army and knew I wanted to come back in ... this time as a Soldier,” Frias said. “My two younger brothers joined the military after I did, one joined the Air Force and the other enlisted in the Army.”

Frias opted to join the Army Reserve, choosing to become a combat engineer, seeking a challenging career and the chance to work with explosives.

“I joined the Army Reserve mainly because my wife had a good paying job and I wanted to serve locally,” he explained. “I had the opportunity to receive Active Duty Operational Support (ADOS) orders at my unit and that’s when I got the itch for serving on a full time status again.”

In June, Frias got his wish and was assigned to the Phoenix Recruiting Battalion, entering the recruiting environment in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, which Frias admitted has been a challenge.

“Due to the pandemic I wasn’t able to go out into the community and interact face to face initially,” Frias added. “That made it a little challenging and I had to rely

solely on social media and phone calls.”

“Now that things have subsided a little I am able to go into the community, drop off business cards and brochures, and interact with business owners and employees,” he continued. “This is allowing me to get to know the area and the people better.”

With his first contract under his belt, Frias said he is easing into the recruiting role and sees himself becoming a permanent recruiter, ably supported by wife of six years, Catherin and his three children, Brody, 10, Natalia, 6 and Sofia, 5.

“This job may be stressful but I have already seen the positive impact a good and empathic recruiter can have on an individual,” Frias said. “It’s a great feeling seeing a new enlistee smiling ear to ear knowing that joining the Army will help them achieve their goals.”

School Supply/Backpack Drop



Paradise Valley Recruiting Station teamed up with Pappas Kids to fill backpacks with necessary school supplies such as folders, pens and pencils, binders and notecards, Aug. 3 and brought those backpacks to schools around the valley.

The first stop was Paradise Valley High School, which was able to take over 100 bags as donations for their students in need. PVHS Assistant Principal Paul Havlovic lent a hand in unloading the backpacks to distribute to his upcoming students for the 2020-2021 school year.

Glendale recruiter escapes factory life, finds success with service

Story by Alun Thomas, U.S. Army Recruiting BN-Phoenix



Sgt. 1st Class Daniel Moe, recruiter, Arrowhead Recruiting Station, Phoenix West Recruiting Company, poses with his three children, Ezra, 5 (left), Ariel, 5, and Thomas, 7 (right), Prescott Basin, July 11, 2020, Prescott, Ariz. (Courtesy Photo)

GLENDALE, Ariz. – A freezing winter morning dawned for Sgt. 1st Class Daniel Moe in Jan. 2008, as he prepared to travel to his factory job in Horicon, Wis.

He roused himself into action and started his car, knowing he'd need a solid 45 minutes before it was warm enough to traverse the slick, snow filled roads, laden with black ice.

As he looked at himself in the mirror, just 18 years of age, Moe thought 'is this what I want for my future?'

There had to be more than a lifetime ahead of factory work and toil.

Moe knew what he had to do and traveled to his local Army recruiting station, enlisting just two weeks later. It's a decision he hasn't regretted, some 12 years removed from that day of realization.

Moe, recruiter, Arrowhead Recruiting Station, Phoenix West Recruiting Company, has led an extensive journey ever since, taking him around the world , with opportunities only the Army can provide. ***(continued next page)***

Glendale recruiter escapes factory life (cont.)

Originally born in Milwaukee, Moe moved to the small town of Horicon at a young age and spent his entire childhood there.

“Horicon is a very small town, with factories and farms being the primary sources of income,” Moe said. “I attended first grade through senior year in the Horicon School District, with my graduating class being 86 students. Once I graduated I worked in a factory in town for several months, while attending a technical college.”

Moe knew this type of lifestyle was not for him and sought to break away from a mundane existence.

“I had decided tech school and working in a factory was not for me. My parents had been working factories my entire childhood and I did not want that for myself,” he said. “It was a quick process for me, I enlisted within a couple weeks of walking into the door. My recruiter was very helpful and explained what I should expect moving forward. He was honest and straight forward.”

Moe had wanted to join the Army since 9-11 in 2001, the terrorist attacks that day having a profound effect on him.

“I was in 7th Grade watching our country get attacked ... 9-11 was a very defining moment in my life and from then on I wanted to serve and help stop things like that happening in our country again,” Moe explained. “My grandfather and most of my great uncles all served in Vietnam and Korea. They did have some influence on me joining, but overall it was the terrorist attacks that really solidified my plan.”

Moe sought a combat based job and decided on a military occupational specialty that would give him the desired experience.

“I enlisted as a 12B, combat engineer. I wanted to do a job where I would have the opportunity to learn demolitions and blow things up,” Moe stated. “I wanted combat experience and felt this MOS would give me all of that.”

This proved to be the case, as Moe deployed to Iraq twice with the 511th Sapper Company, 326th Engineer Battalion, 101st Airborne Division, awarding him the type of action he had been seeking.

“My first deployment was to Kirkuk in 2009. We conducted route clearance during that deployment,” Moe said. “During the year, I conducted over 250 missions and helped train an Iraqi engineer regiment on basic soldiering skills.”

Moe’s second deployment was in 2011 with the same unit, however this time they were based in Baghdad.

“During this mission we were tasked with route clearance, base security, and training Iraqi engineers,” he continued. “We spent the majority of the deployment living at the Victory Base Complex outside of Baghdad international airport, but also spent a couple months living in a palace in the Green Zone.”

By the time Moe left this deployment, his platoon was among the last 2500 U.S. soldiers in Iraq, as Operation New Dawn ended, allowing him to see out the end of an era for the U.S. Army.

For Moe however, his greatest accomplishment was obtaining the coveted Sapper tab.

(continued next page)

Glendale recruiter escapes factory life (cont.)

“My biggest opportunity was being given the chance to attend the Sapper Leader Course at Fort Leonard Wood,” Moe said. “It was very challenging, both mentally and physically but I earned my Sapper tab and knowledge that will last me a lifetime. I also participated in the 2010 Best Sapper competition and placed 14th out of 29 teams.”

Moe also attended several professional development schools, including Air Assault School and schools related to route clearance, before he was selected for recruiting duty.

“I was a recruiter for three years in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, before moving to the Arrowhead station in Glendale. I have been here for almost two years,” Moe explained. “My experiences have been great in recruiting. I am learning so much about our young men and women and am able to be a permanent influence on their careers and lives.”



As with all recruiters, Moe has had to adapt to the current COVID-19 pandemic environment, which has made recruiting infinitely more challenging.

“We are in unprecedented times and have to adjust everything on the fly,” Moe said. “We are limited on how we meet potential recruits due to schools being closed and many people limiting their time away from home,” Moe said.

Moe said he is optimistic about his future once his recruiting commitment comes to an end, with a host of plans at his disposal.

“I am positive about my future in the Army. I am looking at expanding my career and possibly applying for Officer Candidate School,” he said. “With my career I have been able to work on my bachelor degree, which I will earn later this month. Even if I don’t go to OCS, I plan on continuing my career as a combat engineer and retiring when I am at 20 years of federal service.”

Moe said his inspiration to serve comes from not just his love of country, but also his three children, Thomas, seven, and Ezra and Ariel, both five.

“My children are the light of my life and the reason I am still serving today,” Moe said.

Arizona recruit sheds over 40 pounds as ship date nears

Story by Alun Thomas, U.S. Army Recruiting BN-Phoenix



Johann Serna, a native of Buckeye, Ariz., participates in Future Soldier training at the Arrowhead Recruiting Station, Glendale, Ariz., Sept. 3. Serna lost over 40 pounds in order to be in optimal physical condition, as he prepares to depart for Basic Combat Training, at Fort Sill, Okla., starting Sept. 30. (U.S. Army Photo by Alun Thomas, USAREC Public Affairs)

GLENDAL, Ariz. – In early March of this year, Johann Serna was at a turning point in his life.

As the world began to adapt to COVID-19, Serna was grappling with the reality of what lay ahead in his immediate future. College hadn't worked out for him and he knew he needed a viable future.

That's when Serna went to the Arrowhead Recruiting Station, Phoenix West Recruiting Company, and decided to join the Army, the 19 year old wanting to serve his nation for a higher cause.

Almost six months later, Serna is gearing up to ship to Basic Combat Training at Fort Sill, Okla., having lost over 40 pounds in a determined effort to be physically ready for the rigors ahead.

When Serna first talked to a recruiter, he weighed 235 pounds and was not in optimal condition, understanding he had to improve his fitness.

"I had been going to school for mechanical engineering, but I had burnt myself out and took a break for a couple of months," Serna said. "A recruiter called me and asked if I'd be interested in the Army and my first questions were about height and weight." ***(continued next page)***

Arizona recruit sheds over 40 pounds (cont.)

Serna said he generated a routine that saw him begin to lose weight rapidly.

“In the morning I walk two miles on the treadmill, work out my arms and legs, then do another two mile walk,” he said. “I’ve been doing that for a good five months.”

Serna said he felt good once he started seeing his weight drop, his hard work paying off handsomely.

“At first I didn’t think I’d be able to do it, but once I starting losing the pounds, I was proud of myself,” Serna added. “It’s just a matter of sticking with it.”

Serna said it’s often been difficult adhering to the regime once he started losing weight, but over time he has gotten used to it, aided in part by his job.

“I work at Chipotle, so I mainly eat there – brown rice, chicken – which is all I’ve basically eaten for the last five months,” Serna continued.

Serna is now looking ahead to basic training, which will be followed by Advanced Individual Training at Joint Base San Antonio-Sam Houston, where he will attempt to become a medical logistics specialist.

“I originally wanted to do infantry, but due to my eyesight I wasn’t able to,” Serna explained. “I have 20/30 vision, so I took another job, which I had no issue with.”

With his ship date to basic training coming on Sept. 30, Serna said he is both nervous and excited as the date draws closer.

“I think once I’m there and get into the routine, I’ll be fine,” Serna said. “I’ll be glad to get started and do the real thing.”

Serna praised his recruiter for guiding him through the process and getting him the in shape he needed to be in.

“He (Mills) did a great job, especially when COVID hit and everything slowed down,” Serna said. “For a while I almost thought about backing out, but he told me to hang in there and I’m glad I did.”



Tempe recruiter excels serving adopted country

Story by Alun Thomas, U.S. Army Recruiting BN-Phoenix



Staff Sgt. Roberto Morales (second left), recruiter, Superstition Recruiting Station, Tempe Recruiting Company, poses with service members from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1-12 Cav., 12th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, Mosul, Iraq, 2017. Morales was assigned to the unit as a cavalry scout. (Courtesy Photo)

TEMPE, Ariz. – For many immigrants, serving in the U.S. Army is a way of giving back to the nation which has given them a better life and helped make their dreams become reality.

It's a selfless service which makes the Army a unique melting pot of Soldiers from many diverse races and nations.

Part of this group is Staff Sgt. Roberto Morales, a recruiter for Superstition Recruiting Station, Tempe Recruiting Company, who was born and raised in Mexico, until he left for the United States at the age of 9.

Morales, 30, was born in Mexico City, before moving to Texas, with his family looking for a new start. Things however were not easy, with Morales having to undertake some tough adjustments during his youth.

"I grew up in Sherman, Texas, where I went to school and graduated in 2007," Morales said. "I grew up with my mom and stepfather until about my sophomore year in high school. Due to the living conditions and circumstances I was facing growing up in, I had to leave."

Tempe recruiter excels serving adopted country (cont.)

Fortunately for Morales he found a place to live with his girlfriend and her family.

“I had to find another place to live in order to make it through high school. I moved to my girlfriend and her parents house at that time in order to focus on school and graduating,” he said. “I’ve been married to Heather for 12 years now and she is one of the biggest blessings in my life.”

Morales developed an interest in the Army during his high school years, thanks to frequent visits from local recruiters.

“My interest in the Army was sparked when an Army recruiter came into our classroom to give us a presentation,” Morales explained. “He ended up being my recruiter when I enlisted and was very helpful with any questions or concerns I had. I felt that he always had my best interest at heart and wanted to help me and my family out.”

Morales enlisted at the age of 24 in 2013, opting to become a 19D, cavalry scout.

“I chose cavalry scout as my MOS (military occupational specialty) because I wanted to deploy and fight for this great country,” Morales said. “My brother-in-law is also a cavalry scout, so that played a factor in me choosing that MOS as well.”

Morales had the opportunity to deploy in 2017 to Iraq with the 1st Cavalry Division and found himself in a situation where his Army training became essential.

“During my deployment to Mosul, we encountered an incident where our leader’s recon came under heavy fire, injuring one of our sniper leaders,” Morales recalls. “I maneuvered in order to get to the casualty and carry him out to safety under fire.”

For his heroism, Morales was awarded an Army Commendation Medal with Valor, something he attributes to the leadership who molded him.

“I have been very blessed with great leadership and mentors in my short career, which have played a vital role in molding me into the leader and noncommissioned officer I am today,” Morales said. “This was a very humbling and a proud moment in my career.”

In 2019, Morales was assigned to the Phoenix Recruiting Battalion, throwing him a new challenge, one he has taken on energetically, resulting in being named Fifth Recruiting Brigade’s 3rd Quarter NCO of the Quarter, for fiscal year 2020.

“I’ve only been recruiting for almost a year now and I absolutely love it,” he said. “I enjoy the fact that we can change someone’s life, by providing an opportunity to be part of a great organization that loves to take care of its people and families.”

With the support of Heather, his two children, daughter Isabella, 12, and son, Bentley, 10, Morales is confident about his family’s future and his Army career, while also pursuing a bachelor’s degree in Homeland Security at Grand Canyon University.

“I’d like to continue my career in the Army as long as possible ... I hope to get promoted to sergeant first class and continue to develop and lead young Soldiers into great Army leaders,” he said. “When I eventually retire, hopefully I can continue to impact people in a positive way.”

Future Soldier Swear in Ceremony



The Chandler Army Recruiting Station had the pleasure of performing a Future Soldier swear in for PFC Guerinot, Sept. 12. PFC Guerinot and his family were all present for the swear in ceremony that was performed by the Phoenix Central Recruiting Company commander Captain Kenneth D. Forsblade. PFC Guerinot joined the Army as a PFC based on his accomplishment to obtain his Eagle Scout prior to his enlistment. PFC Guerinot also was given a BN CDR/BN CSM challenge coin by the battalion commander, Lt. Col. Brandon Oliveira.

Tucson Hispanic Community Engagement



SSG Klimek and SGT Dimas from Foothills Recruiting Station (4P2N), and SSG Trujillo from Old Pueblo Recruiting Station (4P2P), collaborated with Chicanos Por La Causa (CPLC, Ms. Lydia Aranda) and League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC, Mr. Richard Estrada) to canvass South Tucson on Saturday, Sept. 12, urging residents to participate in the 2020 Census. . This opportunity to lend a helping hand to local Latino organizations begins the process of healing the relationships between the US Army and the Latino community in Southern Arizona.