

The Mojave Chamber of Commerce and Mojave Transportation Museum Foundation were pleased to join with the Mojave Air & Spaceport to honor America's Veterans.

We were so thankful for the beautiful weather for Veterans Day. Usually the wind is howling, but yesterday was perfect!

Thank you Shirlee Wilson for taking photos at the Veterans Day ceremony at Mojave Air & Spaceport!

Rev. Charles Lowery, Heirs with Christ Church – Mojave gave the Invocation and Tim Lomba sang the National Anthem. Jed Hannon, Bear Valley Springs Veterans Association lead the Pledge of Allegiance.



Veterans in the audience were introduced, including: Noel Dees – WWII Veteran, U.S. Navy. Noel was 97 on Nov. 3rd – he was born 8 days before the signing of the Armistice ending WWI. Olive Guy and Lela Mae



Mulherin, two of Mojave's special women World War II veterans, who served in the Army. They will both be 95 on Dec 3, 2015.

Chuck Eras – served aboard USS Valley Forge off the coast of Korea as a Fire Controlman and played Taps at the conclusion of the ceremony.

Ken Kendall – Vietnam Veteran, USMC

Ralph Wise – USMC Fighter Pilot – Vietnam

Stuart Witt, USN – former GM/CEO, Mojave Air & Spaceport

Other VIPs in attendance were: Keenan Hothschild, Office of Congressman McCarthy and Ryan Rush, Office of Zack Scrivner, 2nd District Supervisor.

Letters and messages were read from Congressman Kevin McCarthy – Keenan Hothschild; State Senator Jean Fuller – read by Cathy Hansen and from Zack Scrivner – 2nd District Supervisor – Ryan Rush.



Keynote Speaker: Sgt. First Class Christine Maag-Yandek served two military tours in Iraq as a combat medic with the 82nd Airborne and 1st Infantry Division. She also was the only woman who deployed as a State Dept. Security Contractor to serve as a member of Ambassador Ryan Crocker's personal security detail, as well as his medic, and medic to his protection team.

She joined the Army in 1993 and served on active duty until 2001 and then transitioned into the Army Reserve. Total time of service has been 17 years.



Christine lived in the Washington D.C. area on 9-11 and was part of a unit that was activated to respond to the terrorist attack on the Pentagon. She was also activated to serve as part of the security force that protected Washington D. C. in the aftermath in Operation Noble Eagle.

Allison Gatlin captured Sgt. Maag-Yandek's words perfectly in the article that appeared in the Antelope Valley Press, Nov. 12, 2015.

Military service is a family tradition for Maag-Yandek, whose grandfather was

among those to storm the Normandy beaches on D-Day.

She recalled speaking with him the night before she was to leave for boot camp, when he took her aside and asked if she had any questions.

"That was unusual because my grandfather was a man of few words. He never talked about his service, especially his wartime service," she said.

Maag-Yandek asked if he was scared as he headed toward the beach on D-Day.

"You bet your sweet ass I was scared" was the answer.

She then asked how he overcame that fear, "to fight for your survival that day."

"He looked me straight in the eye and said, "I wasn't fighting for my survival. I was fighting for the men next to me. I was fighting for my family back home, to include your grandmother, and I was fighting for the survival of our free country," she said.

Her grandfather went on to say the only thing he was afraid of was not being a good enough soldier and failing to win that fight.

She wondered how she would know if she was a good enough soldier, and her grandfather told her she would know if, looking back on her military service one day, she would do it all over again.

The opportunity came for her sixteen years later during an interview following her service at the Pentagon and in Iraq.

She recalled for the journalist "what it was like arriving to the site of a helicopter crash where there were no survivors to help ... what it was like witnessing a person burn to death in a fuel truck that had been hit by an improvised explosive device."

"I described to the journalist what it was like trying to keep a casualty alive whose body had nearly been ripped apart in an IED explosion ... what it was like to lose my hearing for three days after being so close to an IED that detonated near a casualty I was trying to help, and I described what it was like to sleep in a bunker all night long because we had mortars raining down on our forward operating base."



After describing her experiences, the journalist asked Maag-Yandek if she would do it all over again and she replied, "Absolutely." To his question as to why, she recalled her grandfather and replied, "Because I wasn't fighting for me."

Sincere thanks and appreciation to Sally and Ken Kendall for the POW/MIA Recognition Table Ceremony.

Thank you General Manager and CEO Karina Drees and the Mojave Air & Spaceport for all of their work in preparing for this Veterans Day ceremony. Thank you to Harold Smith for the sound system and podium set up and Doug Burdick for setting up all of the chairs and tables. Many thanks to the Mojave Seniors serving cookies and coffee. And thank you, to Stoken's Donuts for the yummy donuts. Great flyovers by Robert "Stambo" Stambovsky in a T-34 and Dave VanHoy in a T-6 Texan!

