

# BLACKSTONE POST



The  
Voice of  
Blackstone  
Security



The Secret to Our Success is in Our People

WINTER, 2018

## Reconnecting Veterans to the Civilian World

### Blackstone Veterans Hiring Initiative Keeps Marching Along in El Paso

El Paso, Texas – Blackstone’s Veterans Hiring Initiative continues to pay dividends in this West Texas city.

Blackstone was again present at the Fort Bliss Hiring Fair earlier this year. The semiannual event seeks to provide job opportunities to military veterans who are about to transition to civilian life, and their family members. The event attracted upwards to 900 attendees in February and more than a thousand attended the hiring fair last August.

This was the seventh hiring fair attended by a representative from Blackstone’s El Paso office, which has taken the lead in the company’s efforts to recruit and retain military veterans, their spouses and children. District Manager Vanessa Polanco, the daughter of a U.S. Air Force veteran, has seen firsthand the challenges veterans face re-entering society and aggressively pursues veteran hiring opportunities through a number of veteran-oriented employment programs.

She said the fact that Blackstone is veteran-owned provides the incentive.



“I chose to do something Blackstone is already founded upon,” Polanco said. “Being here in El Paso, Fort Bliss is half our town and we see service members all the time. To have them employed with us makes our team more elite. They’re dedicated, loyal and disciplined. Everything is a mission to them, so they keep their word.”

Polanco added that veterans like the family environment Blackstone offers.

“When they leave the military, sometimes it’s hard for them to transition to civilian life, so they really connect with us,” she continued. They enjoy the fact that we’re veteran-owned, because they realize that we can relate to them. It’s not just a job to them, it’s another home.”

Blackstone Account Manager David Garcia, himself a retired U.S. Army sergeant, attended his third consecutive hiring fair. “I feel that since I am a veteran, I am helping other veterans find employment,” he said. “I know that when it’s time to leave the military, the transition can be difficult. I am trying to help with that process.”

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## Onsite Training Pays Off

### Tucson Manager’s Debut is “Electrifying”



Jose Velez Pino

Tucson, Ariz. – New Blackstone Division 34 Manager Jose Pino had a baptism by fire when less than two weeks on the job, he was faced with an onsite crisis that was a hazard to public safety.

When Blackstone took over the security duties at a local mine, the security officers who were going to work the mine, their supervisors and administrative staff were required to take an intense, 24-hour training course on every aspect of mining, especially safety and emergency response. They watched film of mining disasters and were placed in a mine simulator where they faced underground emergencies such as fire, gas leaks and explosions. Then, they had to pass a final exam.

“It was very informative,” said Tucson District Sales Manager Ryan Swindall. “I never realized how dangerous it really is to be a miner. There is danger at every turn.”

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## POST ORDERS

Dan Swindall, President & CEO

### Management Longevity Crucial to Blackstone's Success

Longevity is its own reward. It's important in just about every aspect of our lives as well as in business.

In an industry with a turnover rate that hovers around 300 percent, depending upon the source of the stats you're reading, longevity is the gold standard for any security company.

Nowhere in a security company's operation is longevity more important than in the members of its management team. They carry the DNA of your company. Within that DNA is professionalism, quality service, ethical behavior, teamwork and company pride. These qualities comprise a company's credo and adds value to its brand. These qualities are passed along to the employees by the management team.

More is expected from managers, so by default, they are scrutinized more and have more invested in them.

Longevity gives the managers the valuable commodity of perspective on the industry and on the company, providing them with a "then-and-now" ability to assess both. It also gives them the ability to project into the future and envision what a company can be.

Longevity also gives managers a sense of pride of ownership. They also can see how their efforts have sustained the company and contributed to its success. They know exactly where the company fits in the industry, its ideal clients, strengths and areas of vulnerability. They develop an adeptness in supervising people that is in within company guidelines.

Longevity helps develop relationships with clients that make them feel more like partners. They come to trust individuals because of the continuity.

Security officers who report to these managers can sense the pride and dedication that longevity has instilled in them.

Blackstone's success is predicated on our slogan, "The secret to our success is in our people." Our current team of managers and administrative staff are a group of veterans who have longevity with Blackstone and I'd like to thank them for their loyalty and contributions to the company. They are: Executive Vice President, Jeanne Croft, 14 years; Human Resources Manager, Mitzi Hagan, 13 years; Operations Director, Ken Vandiver, 8 years; Houston Regional Manager, Tony Browe, 10 years; El Paso District Manager, Vanessa Polanco, 9 years; Administrative Accountant, Bill "Hutch" Hutchison, 8 years; Administration Receptionist, Kay Hussar, 7 years (split); and Tucson District Sales Manager, Ryan Swindall, 6 years.

My thanks to all of the aforementioned managers and administrators and the support staffs that keep our District offices running smoothly.

#### Walk the Walk



### Self-Image is a Matter of Being Yourself

By Tony Browe, Division Manager, Houston



What is "Self-Image" and why is it important? A short definition of "Self-Image" is "an idea a person has of their appearance, abilities, and personality".

Basically, your self-image is what you think of yourself.

It's very easy to have an inflated self-image in this age of "everyone is special" and "participation trophies for all". Some days I still think I'm the track star of

old, then I get tired and out of breath tying my shoes and remember those days are long gone. Unfortunately, with the vile nastiness

of social media it's just as easy to get down and feel too negative about one's self.

Some people believe that their self-image is molded by events that surround them such as family issues, work problems, diet, lack of sleep, schooling, etc. I like to believe that WE shape those events through our self-image. Yes, sometimes things wind up out of our control, but the vast majority of events that occur in our daily lives are things that WE should control and not let them control us.

If you feel upset about something, you may feel like displaying that to your family or the public, and this could invite negative reactions to anything you may say, however reasonable.

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**GALLUP, NM**  
Satellite  
Scott Clark – Area Manager

**Former NYC Police Officer**

## Jose Pino is New Head of Tucson Office

**Tucson, Ariz.** – Law enforcement and private security veteran Jose Velez Pino is the new Division Manager in Blackstone's Division 34 in Tucson. Pino is a former New York City police officer with more than 20 years of security and personal bodyguard protection experience.

**Jose Velez Pino**

Pino has worked security for international security companies and has led personal security details protecting high-profile international governmental personalities, including the former president of Pakistan, Pervez Musharraf.

Pino's family moved to New York from Puerto Rico when he was 3 years old. He spent 36

years there, growing up in Spanish Harlem. Pino served in several capacities with the NYPD, including 11 years as an NYPD Housing Officer in what was considered a Gang Unit.

Pino came to Blackstone from another security company. He said he did so to see what Blackstone had to offer. "I had a gut feeling that I would be doing something more than standing a post, so I took the job as a division manager when it was offered to me."

Despite his extensive background, Pino is still keen on continuing to grow professionally. "It is my great passion to continue serving the security community," he said. "I am committed to enhancing my knowledge of security techniques, policies and procedures."

Pino has completed intensive security training programs through various policing and security units across the United States that also included stops in Connecticut and California as well as previous security positions in Arizona.

Pino relocated to Arizona to be near his fiancée, Jessica San-socie, an executive coordinator in the defense contractor industry, and her family. "I love the area and the people of the Southwest," he said.

## Electrifying

*Continued from Page 1*

That training would be put into play sooner than anyone thought.

At 7:33 p.m. on Feb. 14, Pino was notified by security officer Chris Alvidrez that a contractor had accidentally downed a power line that was "sparking" and setting intermittent fires to grass in the immediate area, according to the Incident Report.

The situation was made even more critical because it happened during a driving rain storm.

Pino took over Alvidrez's post at the gate and sent him to secure the area and set up a 100-foot perimeter. Alvidrez was joined by the contractor and the two set up a barricade using their vehicles, as per the training. Alvidrez also made sure any equipment in

**Former Corrections Officer**

## Dustin Shorter Leads Blackstone's Albuquerque Office

**Albuquerque, NM** – Dustin Shorter is Blackstone's new Division Manager in Albuquerque.

A native of Orem, Utah, he studied Criminal Justice at Provo College and entered the criminal justice field as a corrections officer at Ely State Prison in Nevada. Interested in advancing his career in security, Shorter left Corrections for the private sector and quickly advanced his career by pursuing a management position in Albuquerque while travelling to meet the needs of his clients.

**Dustin Shorter**

With encouragement from friends, family and colleagues

Dustin decided to stay in Albuquerque to continue expanding his success in New Mexico. Passionate about the security industry, he helped found the New Mexico Professional Security Association (NMPESA) and serves on the Board. An experienced state certified instructor, Shorter is currently working on obtaining certificates from ASIS and additional instructor licenses.

He said that when the opportunity to join the Blackstone team came across his desk, he conducted research on the company.

"What I found was a company that shared my sense of responsibility, ethical priorities, dedication to the industry and a passion for what we do," Shorter said. "I asked the owner, Dan Swindall, what his company could offer me to meet my personal and professional goals and he not only gave me the opportunity I was looking for, he also inspired new direction in my career and together I believe we have a formula for success. I am grateful to be a part of the Blackstone Team and I look forward to a long career working alongside folks that really care about the industry and about their employees."

the area was turned off and clear of the downed power lines.

Pino, who has previous security experience at a mine as a guard and supervisor, then called the mine's health and safety manager to report the incident. He was told to make sure people were kept at least 100 feet away.

Sound familiar?

Nick Winters, a Blackstone supervisor, also arrived to lend a hand.

Firefighters arrived and took control of the situation. The power company arrived and cut the juice to the lines. The crisis was under control.

Pino said he was impressed by the performance of his crew. "They were excellent throughout the whole event," he said.

Pino viewed his baptism by fire as part of the job. "It was surprising but manageable," Pino said. "In this line of work, you must be prepared for the unexpected."



## Jerry Snyder

**Officer of the Quarter  
Division 32 – Phoenix**



**Phoenix** – Jerry Snyder is a man of few words, but plenty of action. Since 2005 when he came to Blackstone, Snyder has developed into an ideal team player willing to take up the slack whenever and wherever needed.

That's much of the reason why Snyder is the Officer of the Quarter for Blackstone's Division 32 Office in Phoenix.

Blackstone Director of Operations Ken Vandiver said Snyder is a dependable professional who is willing to put in the extra effort to help his team.

"Security Officer Snyder is always on time and present for all of his assigned shifts," Vandiver said. "He is also willing to pick up extra shifts when it is needed."

When Snyder was asked what he likes most about Blackstone, he responded, "The staff that I work with." When asked what he enjoyed most about his job, he replied simply, "Helping People."

"I do what I can to make sure everything is watched so everyone can feel safe," Snyder said.

When the native of Little Rock, Arkansas is not busy helping others feel safe, he enjoys listening to music and watching old movies.

Snyder is the father of two adult sons, 28 and 30 years of age.

Congratulations, Jerry. And thanks for being a Blackstone ambassador!

## Boots

*Continued from Page 2*

You want people to work with you, respect you, and cooperate, right? Controlling your emotions and projecting a positive self-image will help get the desired results.

What are some ways to help build a positive and realistic self-image?

- Stop constantly comparing yourself to others. Be the best YOU, not a second-best them.
- Respect YOURSELF on a daily basis by practicing good personal hygiene and set small goals for yourself each day like getting up without hitting the snooze button, clean one room each day, etc. If you don't respect yourself, who will?
- Find room in the budget to treat yourself at least once a month. Set a day on the calendar each month and do something nice for YOU not someone else. No matter how small it is you do deserve a reward. Setting a specific date gives you a definitive thing to look forward to.
- Try something new and challenging. If you don't succeed immediately remember it's the work you put in, not always the end result.
- Figure out how to handle healthy and constructive criticism and turn it into something you can use to learn and grow, but



## Lane Benally

**Officer of the Quarter  
Division 42 - Albuquerque**



**Gallup, NM** – When Blackstone Area Manager Scott Clark describes Lane Benally's work ethic, he uses words and phrases such as "dependable," "above and beyond," and "constantly on patrol." That's why Lane is Officer of the Quarter for Blackstone's Division 42 based in Albuquerque, NM. Clark said he has yet to arrive onsite and find Lane sitting in the security office at Shiprock High School.

"Lane takes his duties very seriously," Clark said. "He is onsite to provide security for staff and students and he shows that he cares for the well-being of both."

Another phrase Clark uses to describe Lane is, "extra mile."

"I have called upon him various times when additional security is needed for various functions and in emergency situations," Clark said. "Lane is also willing to work any post."

Lane, who enjoys bull riding as a hobby, has been in security for about 18 months, all with Blackstone. A native of Naschitti, New Mexico, Lane said he enjoys Blackstone because "we have a boss who is always there for us and will back us in any situation," adding that he enjoys his job because of the "daily interaction with the students and staff."

That coincides with Lane's view of a person's right to security: "Everyone should be able to feel safe," he says. "I hope that when students and staff see me patrolling the area that they know someone else is watching out for them."

Clark says he never worries when Lane is on the job because he knows Lane will behave professionally and will follow the procedures as requested by the client. "I am honored to have a person of this caliber working with me providing the best security we can in this environment," Clark said.

Congratulations, Lane, and thanks for being a Blackstone ambassador!

also figure out how to process needlessly harsh and unnecessary criticism.

- Learn to take responsibility for your actions. Feel good about taking the responsibility, and work to fix the issue.

Once you have more self-esteem and are able to project a better self-image, then people in your life from family members to customers, clients and coworkers will start to respond to you in a more positive manner. We could all use a little more positivity in our lives, right?

"Don't be distracted by criticism. Remember--the only taste of success some people get is to take a bite out of you."

*Zig Ziglar*



## Sgt. Christopher Sikes

**Officer of the Quarter  
Division 52 - El Paso**

**El Paso, Texas** – There is an employment philosophy that states: “Don’t take your boss problems, take solutions.” This is what Sgt. Christopher Sikes does and that’s why he is the Officer of the Quarter for Blackstone’s Division 52 office in El Paso.

And that’s not all.

“Sgt. Sikes is one of the best supervisors that I have had the privilege of working with,” says Blackstone Account Manager David Garcia. “He is a problem solver and he takes care of the officers under his command. The client is very satisfied with the professionalism and dedication that Sgt. Sikes demonstrates at all times.”

Sikes, a native of Farmington, New Mexico, spent five years on the University of Texas, El Paso’s police force before coming to Blackstone eight months ago. He’d been around the block a few times prior to that.

Sikes earned two Medals of Merit in 13½ years with the Farmington Police Department, spending 10 of those years on the bomb squad. So, you could say he’s accustomed to dealing with potentially “explosive” situations.

Sikes said what he likes most about Blackstone is the “quick and helpful response from my immediate supervisor,” adding that what he likes most about his job is “being part of such a great team.”

Sikes’ philosophy on providing security to clients is, “We strive to greet and assist our clients each and every day and to provide them with a safe work environment.”

When Sgt. Sikes is not keeping clients safe, he is either enjoying his favorite hobbies of woodworking and long-distance shooting, or he is spending time with his lovely wife, Marie, and their beautiful daughter.

Congratulations, Sgt. Sikes, and thanks for being a Blackstone ambassador!

## WWII Navajo Code Talker Roy Hawthorne Sr. Dies In Arizona At 92



Navajo Code Talker Roy Hawthorne, who used his native language as an uncrackable code during World War II, died April 21, 2018.

At 92, he was one of the last surviving Code Talkers.

Hawthorne was 17 when he enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps and became part of a famed group of Native Americans who encoded hundreds of messages in the Navajo language to keep them safe from the Japanese. Hawthorne served in

See **CODE TALKER** Page 8

## Veterans

*Continued from Page 1*



### **Blackstone’s David Garcia chats with an attendee of a veterans hiring fair.**

Garcia said that of six applications received from the recent hiring fair, two were hired. To date, Garcia said 27 percent of the 110 employees in El Paso are veterans, reservists or military spouses.

Polanco said El Paso works with the Veterans Affairs, Texas Workforce Commission and the American G.I. Forum National Veterans Outreach Program, Inc. (NVOP).

Jose Orozco is the director of client services for the NVOP, which assists veterans who are struggling with transitioning to civilian life because they are either disabled, homeless or are unfamiliar with the job market.

Orozco said companies such as Blackstone are vital to the success of their mission.

“It is key and vital to have reputable companies like Blackstone hiring our veterans,” Orozco said. “When Blackstone hires a veteran, they are helping us accomplish our mission and impacting a veteran’s life.”

Orozco said Polanco has been aggressive in seeking out his clients. “Vanessa has always been very adamant about making an effort to hire our veterans,” he said. “She has never been an obstacle. On the contrary, she has made every effort to interview individuals and get them processed.”

Polanco praised the G.I. Forum for its assistance. She said the agency provides new hires with boots, belts, rides to work, apartments and pays the rent for the first three months. A former homeless veteran hired through the G.I. Forum was selected as El Paso’s Officer of the Quarter last year.

Blackstone is a Certified Veteran-Owned Small Business by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Founder and CEO Dan Swindall is a veteran of the U.S. Air Force. Overall, 55 percent of the company’s administrative and executive staffs are veterans or family members of veterans. “I applaud the efforts of the Division 52 and all the divisions in supporting this initiative,” Swindall said.

“All progress takes place outside the comfort zone.”  
*Michael John Bobak*



**This is the first in a series of articles aimed at the general health and welfare of Blackstone employees, our clients and anyone else who should happen to read them. The secret to our success is in our people, and we want to keep you healthy. Versions of these safety reminders will be posted on our website at [www.blackstonesecurity.com](http://www.blackstonesecurity.com).**

## Taking the Heat

Summer has us all in its crosshairs, no matter if you're in Arizona, Texas or New Mexico. Here is some information you may already know, but you can't have too many safety reminders. Heaven forbid you should get to your post and find yourself with no water and no shade.

No pun intended, but it boils down to the hard fact that we need to be prepared to work in the heat. Here are some tips that hopefully will help keep you cool in extreme temperatures.

## Safety Tips

- Dress for summer. Wear loose-fitting lightweight, light-colored clothing to reflect heat and sunlight.
- Put less fuel on your inner fires. Foods, like meat and other proteins that increase metabolic heat production also increase water loss.
- Drink plenty of water, non-alcoholic and decaffeinated fluids. Your body needs water to keep cool. Drink plenty of fluids even if you don't feel thirsty. Persons who have epilepsy or heart, kidney or liver disease, are on fluid restrictive diets or have a problem with fluid retention should consult a physician before increasing their consumption of fluids. Do not drink alcoholic beverages and limit caffeinated beverages.
- During excessive heat periods, spend more time in air-conditioned places. Air conditioning in homes and other buildings markedly reduces danger from the heat. If you cannot afford an air conditioner, go to a library, store or

other location with air conditioning for part of the day.

- Don't get too much sun. Sunburn reduces your body's ability to dissipate heat.
- Do not take salt tablets unless specified by a physician.

## HEAT CRAMPS

- Symptoms:
- Painful muscle cramps and spasms usually in legs and abdomen
- Heavy sweating

## HEAT EXHAUSTION

- Symptoms:
- Heavy sweating
- Weakness
- Cool, pale, clammy skin
- Weak pulse
- Possible muscle cramps
- Dizziness
- Nausea and vomiting
- Fainting
- Normal temperature possible

## HEAT STROKE (or sunstroke)

- Symptoms:
- Altered mental state
- Possible throbbing headache, confusion, nausea, dizziness, shallow breathing
- High body temperature (106°F or higher)
- Skin may be hot and dry, or patient may be sweating
- Rapid pulse
- Possible unconsciousness

## First Aid:

- Heat stroke is a severe medical emergency. Summon emergency medical assistance or get the victim to a hospital immediately. Delay can be fatal.

The only place where success comes before work is in the dictionary."

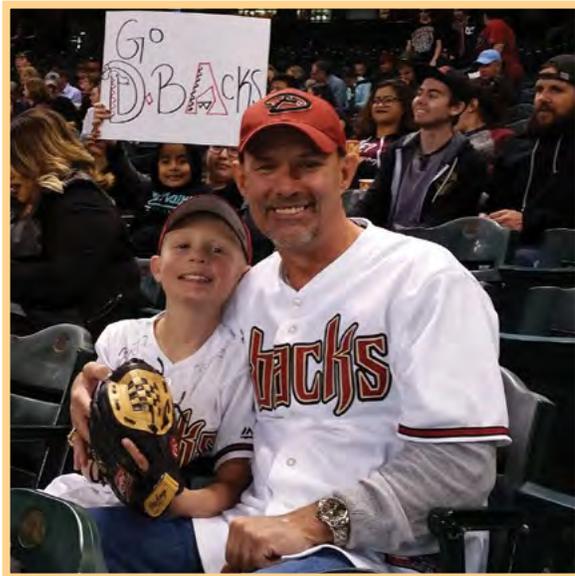
*Vidal Sassoon*

"The difference between who you are and who you want to be is what you do."

*Unknown*

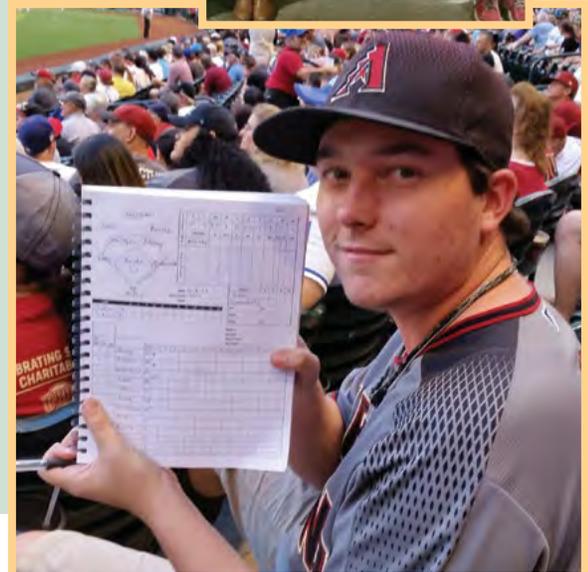
**Fringe Benefits with Blackstone**

♪♪ **Root, root, root for the home team...** ♪♪



Blackstone clients attend Arizona Diamondbacks baseball games, Arizona Cardinals' football games and the Arizona Rattlers' Indoor Football League games with family and friends as guests of Blackstone Security Services, Inc.® where treating clients to these top-notch sports venues has become a tradition.

Attending MLB, NFL and IFL games is a great way for family members to bond with each other and with BFFs. This is just one of the ways Blackstone demonstrates its appreciation to clients. Yell if you see anyone you know!





## Employee Anniversaries

### Thirteen Years

Mitzi Hagan

### Nine Years

James Mattice

### Eight Years

Steven Jones

Ken Vandiver

### Six Years

Francisco Bernal  
Suzi Gartman

Ryan Swindall  
Manuel Zamarron

### Five Years

Christopher Boyes  
Travis Ellington

Jennifer Jones Reger

### Four Years

James Brockmeyer  
Thomas Delgado

Kimberly Hight  
Timothy Murphy

### Three Years

Johnny South

### Two Years

Wally Asmar  
Herman Chee Jr  
Billie Cox, Jr.  
Clay Killion

Gary Wilson  
John White  
Phillip Wulfers

### One Year

William Bryant  
John Leu  
Nathaniel Murdoch  
Keith Rohrman  
Lynton Vanzanten  
Sharon Joe

Douglas MacDougall  
Dennis Rice  
Thomas Salas  
Roderick Simpson  
Michael Tallabas

### Says Involvement in ASIS Important to Industry

## Polanco Elected to Board of El Paso ASIS



Vanessa Polanco

**El Paso, Texas** – Blackstone Division 52 District Manager Vanessa Polanco has been elected treasurer of the El Paso Chapter of ASIS International. The El Paso native has been involved with ASIS for the past two years.

“ASIS is an important professional association that we need to be involved in,” Polanco said. “It’s a way to stay on top of the latest information about the security industry.”

Founded in 1955, ASIS International is the world’s largest membership organization for security management professionals. With hundreds of chapters worldwide, ASIS is recognized as the premier source for learning, board-certification, networking, stan-

dards and research.

Polanco said some of the activities the chapter hosts are valuable, such as tours of the El Paso Police Department Emergency Response Center, the sheriff’s and fire departments and the Border Patrol facilities. “As a security professional, you must know these things, so we can teach each other and our clients,” she said. “This includes knowing crime statistics for the areas where our clients are located so we can base our (contract) quotes on solid information.”

Polanco also encourages her office mates to get involved with professional and community organizations. She is joined in ASIS by Sales Manager Raquel Deal who serves on the Law Enforcement Appreciation Luncheon Committee, and by Assistant Account Manager Vincent McConaughy, who serves on the chapter’s Web Committee.

Blackstone is active in ASIS and Polanco was part of a contingent of Blackstone executives, managers and administrator that attended the ASIS Security & Counter Terror Expo in Dallas last year. Polanco has headed the El Paso office for nine years.

## Code Talker Continued from Page 5

the 1st Marine Division in the Pacific Theatre and was promoted to corporal.

The code was never broken.

“The longer we live, the more we realize the importance of what we did, but we’re still not heroes — not in my mind,” Roy Hawthorne said in 2015.

But Hawthorne’s son, Regan Hawthorne, said Monday his father leaves a proud legacy.

“They went in out of a sense of duty and a spirit of responsibility to their country,” Regan Hawthorne said, adding he didn’t know about his father’s military service until he was in his 20s.

“I grew up not knowing my dad was a Code Talker. He never talked about it, didn’t see the need to talk about it,” he said.

The Code Talkers believed they were just doing their job, he said, and shied away from receiving accolades for their service.

“When we read about the effect the Navajo Code had on shortening the war because of its effectiveness, we think about the guys who did that,” Regan Hawthorne said. “(But) they’re simply humble men who performed what they sensed to be a duty to protect all they cherished.”

He said his father and other Code Talkers returned home from the war and “simply came back to work and went back to making a life.”

As of 2016, there were about a dozen Code Talkers still living. The exact number of Code Talkers is unknown because their work was classified for years after the war ended.

Source: AZCentral.

## Blackstone Security is a Proud Member of:

