

ROLL CALL

Clayton E. Moneymaker American Legion Post 237



Alabama's Largest American Legion Post

Volume 20, Issue 2

February 2020

2900 Drake Ave. SW, Huntsville, AL 35805

256-883-9911



Billy Heatherly
Post 237 Commander

February is Americanism Month. We are planning events such as awards programs and celebration of the American Legion Birthday in the month of March.

At our next meeting on the 17th of February, it will be awards night for our many volunteers who have made a tremendous impact on the past two major events, the Veteran's Day activities and most recently, the Mid-Winter Conference held here in Huntsville.

Speaking of events, for your special lady or gent, a Valentine's Dinner Night is to be held on the 14th of February. Be looking for details in this newsletter.

Remember membership, bring an eligible Veteran to join our Post. ❖

Open House Membership Drive

Post 237 is planning an Open House Membership Drive for Thursday, February 20th. The goal is to reach out to Veterans in Madison County. Look for more details in an upcoming email and flyers at the Post.

A Century of Service



In 2020, Post 237 celebrates our Centennial. We can trace our roots to June 1920, when the Post was activated as the Peter Crump Post. ❖

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Membership Update

Our current Membership is 1092 and our goal is 1451. Please renew as soon as possible. Renew at the Adjutant's Office, weekdays 10AM until 1PM or call for an appointment. Renew online via credit card or setup Automatic Annual Renewal at: www.legion.org/renew

AMERICAN LEGION CLAYTON E. MONEYMAKER POST 237

OFFICERS

Billy Heatherly	Commander
Don Pinkerton	Past Commander
Roy Hall	1st Vice Commander
Tom Paone	2nd Vice Commander
Glen Vela	3rd Vice Commander
Mary McCoy	Adjutant
Bud Pagakis	Finance Officer
Jerry Creel	Chaplain
Nicholas Jones	Service Officer
Michael Kinney	Historian
Gerry Frank	Sergeant-At-Arms
Ken Reisenweber	1 Year Trustee
Dennis Atkins	2 Year Trustee
Ben Cecil	3 Year Trustee

Earl Hokanson	Honor Guard Cdr.
John Murphy	ROTC Liaison
Steve Bowling	S.A.L. Commander
Buddy Miller	S.A.L. Adjutant
Steve Bowling	ALR Director
Sherry Schroen	Auxiliary President
Channa O'Keefe	Club Manager

Executive Committee

Billy Heatherly, Don Pinkerton, Roy Hall, Tom Paone, Glen Vela, Mary McCoy, Bud Pagakis, Jerry Creel, Nicholas Jones, Michael Kinney, Gerry Frank, Ken Reisenweber, Dennis Atkins, and Ben Cecil

House Committee

Glen Vela, Gerry Frank, Billy Heatherly, Tom Paone, Bud Pagakis, Rudy Cowe, Channa O'Keefe, Joyce Hampton, and Steve Bowling

Post Address: 2900 Drake Ave. SW
Huntsville, AL 35805

Phone Number: 256-883-9911

Website: www.legion237.com
Webmaster: webmaster@legion237.com

Facebook Page:
"The Clayton E. Moneymaker American Legion Post 237"

Newsletter Contact: newsletter@legion237.com
Newsletter Archive:
<http://www.legion237.com/index.php?id=126>

Printed copies of the current newsletter are available in the Social Quarters.

HOW DO YOU MEASURE A SOLDIER'S SACRIFICE?

How do you measure a soldier's sacrifice? Is it by the number of friends and family left behind? Is it by the months or years given in service?

How do you measure a soldier's courage? Is it by the number of objectives completed, or by the number of bullets dodged or missions served?

How do you measure a soldier's honor? Is it by the duty he or she volunteers for, or by the number of medals earned?

The simple truth is that these things are immeasurable, as is this country's debt to all who serve, and pay the price for freedom in this land.

*Contributed by Tom Hartley,
Communications Committee and Past Adjutant*

Untitled

I saw a soldier kneeling down,
for this was the first quiet place he had found.
He had traveled through jungles,
rivers and mud, He'd tasted sweat and shed his blood.

He folded his hands and looked to the sky I saw his tears,
as they welled in his eyes.
He spoke to God, and this is what he said,

"God Bless my men, who now lie dead;
I know not what You have in mind,
but when You judge them,
please be kind when they come before You,
they will be poorly dressed but they'll walk proudly,
for they have done their best.

Their boots will be muddy and their clothes all torn,
but these clothes they have so proudly worn.
Their hearts will be still and cold inside,
for they have fought their best and did so with pride.

So please take care of them as they pass Your way,
the price of freedom they've already paid."

AMEN!
& LEST WE FORGET!

Anon.

Contributed by Michael Kinney, Post 237 Historian

The Story of Desmond Doss

By Michael Kinney, Post 237 Historian

Prior to the movie, *Hacksaw Ridge*, coming out, very few people had probably heard of Desmond Doss. Corporal Desmond Doss is the first conscientious objector to be awarded the Medal of Honor. Doss was born in Virginia and raised in a religious household. He was a Seventh-day Adventist. Desmond was raised with a fervent belief in the Bible; especially the sixth and fourth commandments. "Thou shalt not kill" and his religious upbringing included weekly church attendance, on the seventh day.

When Pearl Harbor was attacked, Desmond was working at the Newport News Naval shipyard and could have requested a deferment—but he wanted to do more for his country. He was willing to risk his life on the front lines in order to preserve freedom. When he joined the Army, Desmond assumed that his classification as a conscientious objector would not require him to carry a weapon. He wanted to be an Army medic. As luck would have it, he was assigned to an infantry rifle company. His refusal to carry a rifle caused trouble among his fellow soldiers. They viewed him with disdain and called him a misfit—one man even went so far as to make the statement that once in combat that he would not come back alive. They tried to intimidate him, scold him, assign him extra tough duties, and declared him mentally unfit for the Army. His company commander tried to court martial him. His unwavering convictions were most important to Desmond.

This stature in the unit began to turn around when the men discovered that his quiet medic had a way to heal the blisters on their march weary feet. If someone fainted from heat stroke, this medic was at his side, offering his own canteen. Desmond never held a grudge.

Private Doss served in combat on the islands of Guam, Leyte, and Okinawa. In each military operation, he exhibited extraordinary dedication to his fellow men. While others were taking life, he was busy saving life. When the cry, "medic" rang out on the battlefield, he never considered his own safety. He repeatedly ran into the heat of battle to treat a fallen comrade and carry him back to safety. All this, while enemy bullets whizzed past and mortar shells exploded around him. →

Several times, while treating a wounded soldier, Desmond was so close to enemy lines, he could hear the whispering of Japanese voices.

The only remaining barrier to an allied invasion of their homeland was the Maeda Escarpment on Okinawa, known as, Hacksaw Ridge to the Americans. The men in Desmond's company were trying to capture the imposing rock face. After the company had secured the top of the cliff, the Americans were stunned when suddenly enemy forces rushed them in a vicious counterattack. Officers ordered an immediate retreat. Less than one-third of the men made it back down. Soldiers rushed to climb back down, all but one.

The rest lay wounded, scattered across enemy soil—abandoned and left for dead, if they weren't already. One lone soldier disobeyed orders and charged back into the firefight to rescue as many of his men as he could, before, he either collapsed or died trying. His determination and unflinching courage resulted in at least 75 lives saved that day, May 5, 1945, his Sabbath.

Eventually, the Americans took Hacksaw Ridge. Okinawa was captured inch by bloody inch. Several days later, during an unsuccessful night raid, Desmond was severely wounded. He treated his own wounds as best he could, but while trying to reach safety he was hit by a sniper's bullet, which shattered his arm. He even gave up his own litter for a more seriously wounded soldier. Wounded and losing blood, he still put others ahead of his own safety. He would choose to die so another could live. After all, that's what he read in his Bible. Such was the character demonstrated by Jesus.

At the age of 87, Corporal Desmond Doss died on March 23, 2006 in Piedmont, Alabama, after being hospitalized with difficulty breathing. He is buried in the National Cemetery, Chattanooga, Tennessee.



**BINGO AT THE ANNEX
MONDAY, WEDNESDAY,
THURSDAY AND SATURDAY
6:00PM**



Madison County Oratorical Contest

Tom Paone, 2nd Vice Commander

The Madison County American Legion Oratorical Contest was held at the Madison City Hall on January 25th. Orators competed for scholarship money and the honor of representing Madison County in the District competition on February 1st at Post 15 in Decatur.

Post 237 teamed with the other Post in the county to conduct the contest. Tom McKinney, Post 229 Americanism Chairperson was the Master of Ceremonies and Chairman of the competition. Tom Paone assisted as Vice Chair and Moderator. Michael Kinney served as a contest Judge. Thad Paone pulled double duty as Timekeeper and Tabulator.

The six contestants in the 2020 competition were Mason Lee, Providence Classical; Megan Watkins, 2nd Place from Madison County High School; Payton Groth, Providence Classical; Ellie Wilson, 3rd Place from Providence Classical; Haripriya Mantraratnam, James Clemens High School; Emily Drown, 1st Place, Home Schooled.

The Huntsville High Speech and Debate Team and their coach Elizabeth Clark observed the competition in hopes that some of their members will compete in 2021.



From The Finance Office:

Bud Pagakis, Finance Officer

Your American Legion can accept your car as a donation and help you figure the fair market value. The fair market value of a vehicle is the price a donor could sell it in its current condition to another individual, willing seller or willing buyer, and represents the cash that a donor gives up in the form of the donation. This is a great way to get a needed tax deduction and help the Legion at the same time.

Email: financeofc@legion237.com



ATTENTION MUSICIANS!

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO JAM WITH OTHER VETERANS SEND AN EMAIL TO MARY MCCOY AT: adjutant@legion237.com

Building Fund Thermometer



AUXILIARY NOTES FROM THE MID-WINTER CONFERENCE

Someone said the older generation could be labeled as the “observers”. Surely that person had never attended an American Legion Conference or they would have seen the men and women who came from “Everywhere Alabama” to share their stories of service to their communities and fellow veterans. They came in wheelchairs, on walkers, or hobbling along on canes. But they came and they shared.

They shared stories of veterans who now lived at the VA facilities throughout the state. Through the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation reports the conference attendees were able to share the numerous bingo games (everyone is a winner), lunches for female vets, Christmas in February, Oktoberfest’s and other parties, donations to improve activity rooms, purchase popcorn machines, buy art supplies, and present plush blankets to everyone. The veterans at Robert L. Howard, William F. Green, Bill Nichols, Floyd Tutt Fann, Biloxi, Birmingham, Montgomery, Tuscaloosa, Tuskegee, and the soon to be home in Enterprise, Alabama are near and dear to the Auxiliary’s heart.

The Department National Security Chairman defined the Days of Remembrance as Veterans Day designated to honor all vets, Memorial Day is set aside to honor those who gave all, and Armed Forces Day when we honor those who now serve. (To support our military and their families the Chairman asked that we wear “red” on Fridays.)

It was at the National Conference in 1920 the Auxiliary began the process that would culminate the next year when they were officially named the American Legion Auxiliary. The Community Service Chairman for Alabama suggested each Unit collect 100 items to be donated to a non-profit organization or present certificates to businesses or individuals that fly the flag daily.

→

The Children and Youth Chairman reminded the audience that Today’s children are Tomorrow’s Leaders. She reported youth affiliated with the Auxiliary had placed wreaths on veterans’ graves, sponsored a carnival for Military Children, visited nursing homes, and sponsored food baskets for needy families.

To celebrate 100 years of service Unit 237 will hold a special event in March. This will be announced in the March newsletter.

*Contributed by Shirley Mohler,
Post 237 Auxiliary Americanism Chairperson.*



The Legion Centennial Chili Cook-Off, sponsored by your American Legion Auxiliary on Sunday January 26th, was a rousing success. Five Chili chefs competed for the coveted honor of being the Centennial Chili Champion. Peggy Steeleman won the competition with her tasty Alabama Chili.



Taps

*John E. Carson, Honor Guard Photographer,
Communications Committee*

Familiar to most veterans and especially the Honor Guard of Post 237, the 24 notes of the Lights-Out bugle call and the tune played at veteran funeral and memorial services, the distinctive sound of TAPS dates back to the Civil War.

In July 1862, U.S. General Daniel Butterfield and his brigade were camped near Richmond. Not satisfied with the bugle call used by the Army to signal Lights-Out, Butterfield reworked the call hoping to make it more melodious.

When his bugler, Private Oliver Wilcox Norton played it for the men, buglers from other units became interested and it spread quickly throughout the Army and caught on even with the Confederates.

Shortly after it was created, "Taps" was played for the first time at a military funeral for a Union cannoner killed in action. The man's commanding officer, Captain John Tidball, decided the bugle call would be safer than the three volleys traditionally fired over a soldier's grave. The call could not be confused by the enemy as an attack.

Butterfield's call was originally known by a different name; printed in Army manuals until 1891 as "Extinguish Lights." The name "Taps" most likely arose from the three drumbeats played after the traditional "Lights-Out" known as "Drum Taps", "The Taps" and simply, "Taps."

At Berkeley Plantation today, there is a monument commemorating the origins of "Taps." Berkeley Plantation is the birthplace of Benjamin Harris V, a signer of the Declaration of Independence and also, William Henry Harrison, the ninth president of the United States. (Source: *History.Com*)

On Veterans Day 2019, "Taps" was played for the Honor Guard's 20+ year bugler, Colonel Mike Vaccaro, USAF (Ret.). Though we have a backup measure, we are in need of someone to replace Mike as our bugler. If you or someone you know could fill that role, please contact Earl Hokanson, Honor Guard Commander or anyone at Post 237. →

The playing of "Taps" is an important part of any veteran's funeral or service. Those 24 notes created during the Civil War are likely the most important tune any bugle or trumpet will ever play.

Please contact Honor Guard Commander Earl Hokanson at hongrdcdr@legin237.com if you are interested in joining the Honor Guard..



Post 237 Honor Guard at the Mid-Winter Conference

The Post 237 Honor Guard manned an information table at the 2020 Mid-Winter Conference at the Embassy Suites on Friday and Saturday January 17th and 18th. Honor guard Commander Earl Hokanson and his squad educated Legionnaires on the roll of the Honor Guard and recruited new members. The Post 237 Honor Guard also posted the colors at the opening session.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

LUNCH

SOCIAL QUARTERS

MONDAY – FRIDAY 11AM -1:30PM

Wednesday Steak Special and Friday Fish Special

KARAOKE

SOCIAL QUARTERS

THU 7-11 PM AND SUN 3-7 PM WITH HOWIE

FRIDAY 8-12 PM WITH PAUL

SATURDAY 8-12 PM WITH CAROL

TRIVIA

SOCIAL QUARTERS

MONDAY 7-9 PM WITH PAUL

BINGO

POST 237 ANNEX

MON, WED, THU AND SAT 6 PM

COMMANDER'S BREAKFAST

BALLROOM

2ND SATURDAY 9-10 AM \$5.00 INCLUDING DRINK!

MEMBERSHIP DINNER AND MEETING

BALLROOM

3RD MONDAY DINNER \$5.00 AT 6 PM AND MEETING AT 7 PM

POOL TOURNAMENT

SOCIAL QUARTERS

THURSDAYS 7:00 PM



Around the Post Mid-Winter Conference Steak Night and New Barstools

The Mid-Winter Conference was held at the Embassy Suites in Huntsville on January 17th and 18th. Many of our Officers and members attended. The Post 237 Honor Guard and Auxiliary assisted the Department in conducting the conference. On Friday Post 237 hosted a Steak Night and Karaoke for the conference attendees. It was a huge success. Thank You to all those who helped out including Channa O'Keefe, Glen Vela, Tom and Christie Paone, Nick Jones, Tom Hartley, Sherrie Schroen, Joyce Hampton, Tee Wilson, Carrie Moody, Martha Hall, Carl Conley, Michael Kinney, Sherrie Love, Doug Patrick, and Linda Therhult.

There are 30 new barstools in the Social Quarters. Channa organized a team to unload, unbox, and assemble the new stools. Thank You to all the Members who pitched in to put the new barstools in service including: Channa O'Keefe, Glen Vela, Tom and Christie Paone, Nick Jones, Tom Hartley, Carolyn Decker, Mac McKeithen, Ralph Miller, and Ken Reisenweber.

Social Quarters Hours of Operation

Monday	10:00AM – 12:00AM
Tuesday	10:00AM – 12:00AM
Wednesday	10:00AM – 12:00AM
Thursday	10:00AM – 12:00AM
Friday	10:00AM – 2:00AM
Saturday	10:00AM – 2:00AM
Sunday	12:00PM – 8:00PM

Adjutant's Office Hours

Monday	10:00AM – 1:00PM
Tuesday	10:00AM – 1:00PM
Wednesday	10:00AM – 1:00PM
Thursday	10:00AM – 1:00PM
Friday	10:00AM – 1:00PM

Or call 256-883-9911 to make an appointment

Communications Committee

The Post 237 Communications Committee is tasked with improving communications with our membership, amongst our Legion Family, and with our community.

Our members are: CeVin Barnes, John Carson, Michael Kinney, Tom Hartley, and Tom Paone.

The Roll Call Newsletter is our first project. We are distributing the Newsletter via email. If you did not receive it in your email please send an email to newsletter@legion237.com with your name and your affiliation with the Legion, S.A.L., or Auxiliary.

Past and current newsletters are archived on our website at: <http://www.legion237.com/index.php?id=126>

We are also working to enhance our website, so please visit us at: www.legion237.com

On October 16th Katie Skelley from the Redstone Rocket interviewed several Post 237 officers and committee members. The article ran in the October 30th Special Veterans Edition of the Redstone Rocket. You can find the article at:

https://www.theredstonerocket.com/special/page_6afb6857-9b3d-5c6b-b247-8217aca3cf7d.html

Post 237 was also mentioned by Cathey Carney in her Heard on the Street feature in the November and December 2019 issues of Old Huntsville Magazine. Old Huntsville Magazine will be writing a future article on the history of Post 237.

We appreciate your feedback on the Newsletter and any suggestions for improving communications throughout the Post. Please email your thoughts and items to include in upcoming issues to:

newsletter@legion237.com ❖

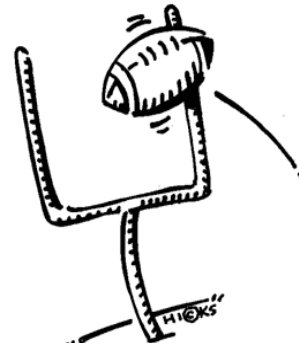
Second Sunday Pot Luck

Join us on the second Sunday of the Month for Karaoke and Pot Luck. Bring a dish to share. February 9th 3-7PM.



Super Bowl Party!

Chiefs or 49ers? Come cheer on your favorite team in the 54th NFL Super Bowl on Sunday, February 2nd. Party in the Social Quarters starting at 5:30PM! No Karaoke.



2020 UGLY WALK



SATURDAY, MARCH 21ST

\$5 HAMBURGERS AND HOTDOGS

5:30-6:30PM

**\$5 ENTRY FEE FOR 'SHOWGIRLS'
SIGNUP AT THE BAR**

SHOWTIME AT 7PM

**BRING FOLDING MONEY TO TIP THE
SHOWGIRLS!!**

**ALL PROCEEDS GO TO A DESERVING
VETERAN'S PROGRAM**

Valentine's Night Dinner



Friday, February 14th

5:30PM – 8:30PM

**Ribeye, Baked Potato, and Salad –
\$13.00**

**Grilled Chicken Breast, Baked
Potato, and Salad –
\$11.00**

**Surf and Turf –
\$17.00**

**Shrimp Plate (Fried or Sauteed)
\$10.00**

**Karaoke with Paul
8:00PM – 12:00AM
Bring your Sweetheart!**



The Grissom High School JROTC will conduct the:



About the Warrior 5K

- An annual 5K to give back and engage with the veterans in our community.
- Past groups we sponsored are: Wounded Warriors, Team Red White and Blue, Semper Fi Community Taskforce, Still Serving Veterans, and Got Your Six.
- Over the past 7 years we've raised over \$57,000.
- This year the 5K will be on March 21, 2020.

For more information please view the Warrior 5K slideshow at:

<http://www.legion237.com/index.php?id=143>

Wargo Scholastic Scholarship Program

If you are a descendant of a United States Military Veteran and plan to attend college or vocational school then the Wargo Scholastic Scholarship may be for you!

The Wargo Scholarship is a \$1000 award paid directly to the educational institution for tuition and fees.

Application must be made before April 15, 2020.

Additional information and the application form are available on the Post 237 website: www.legion237.com
Select Wargo Scholarship. The direct link is:
<http://www.legion237.com/index.php?id=127>

Questions regarding the Wargo Scholarship can be emailed to: wargo@legion237.com



HUMOR IN UNIFORM

VIETNAM STORY

The teacher gave her fifth grade class an assignment: Get their parents to tell them a story with a moral at the end of it. The next day the kids came back and one by one began to tell their stories.

Kathy said, "My father's a farmer and we have a lot of egg-laying hens. One time we were taking our eggs to market in a basket on the front seat of the pickup when we hit a bump in the road and all the eggs went flying and broke and made a mess." "And what's the moral of the story?" asked the teacher. Kathy said, "Don't put all your eggs in one basket." "Very good," said the teacher. "Now Lucy."

Lucy said, "Our family are farmers too. But we raise chickens for the meat market. We had a dozen eggs one time, but when they hatched we only got ten live chicks. And the moral to this story is, don't count your chickens until they're hatched."

"That was a fine story Lucy. Johnny, do you have a story to share?"

Johnny said, "Yes, ma'am, my daddy told me this story about my uncle Bob. Uncle Bob was a Green Beret in Vietnam and his helicopter got hit. He had to crash land in enemy territory and all he had was a bottle of whiskey, a machine gun and a machete. He drank the whiskey on the way down so that the whiskey bottle wouldn't break and then he landed right in the middle of 100 enemy soldiers. He killed seventy of them with the machine gun until he ran out of ammunition, then he killed twenty more with the machete till the blade broke and then he killed the last ten with his bare hands."

"Good heavens!" said the horrified teacher. "What kind of moral did your daddy tell you from that horrible story?"

Johnny said, "Don't piss off Uncle Bob when he's been drinking."

Contributed by Tom Hartley



You know more 'bout EOD stuff than any other "Delta Ten" in the unit... but quite frankly, your Military Courtesy SUCKS!

EOD CARTOONS CONTRIBUTED BY: CLARENCE GOLSON



Right... you got a bunch of U.S. Navy torpedos in Denver... Right! Tell me, are there any hostile submarines there?

To contribute a funny story to Humor in Uniform email to: newsletter@legion237.com



If you have ever been in the Military you know that when one serves the whole family serves. Our military spouses stay behind and raise the family, take care of the day to day business, while working to help support the family. They do what parents normally do together.

Military Spouse Appreciation Day is in May, the Friday before Mother's Day. Let's show our ALA love and support to all of our Military Spouses.

If you know someone who you think has done an outstanding job being a Military Spouse please nominate them for our Military Spouse Award. All nominations should be sent in by May 1, 2020. The Award will be given out at our Past Presidents Parley Luncheon in June 2020.

I would like to nominate _____

She/He has been a Military Spouse for _____ years. She/He deserves this award because:

Please submit all nominations to me by May 1, 2020. The award will be given out at the Past Presidents Parley Luncheon in June 2020.

**Sharon Atkins
1305 4th Ave SE
Cullman, AL 35055**

**256-507-3954
satekins3954@gmail.com**



LUNCH AT THE LEGION

Monday through Friday

11:00AM to 1:30PM

Specials:

Steak - Wednesday

Taco Salad - Thursday

Fish - Friday

Smoke Free Lunch!

The area in front of the bar is smoke-free from 10AM to 2PM on Monday through Friday. The area in back of the bar is open for smokers. Please be courteous and observe these new restrictions.

Coming Soon: Smoke Free Lunch in the Ballroom with Big Screen TVs

VIETNAM'S ABILITY TO ACCOUNT FOR AMERICANS MISSING FROM THE VIETNAM WAR

Provided by Spider Parks, Post 237 POW/MIA Liaison

This account was provided by the National League of POW/MIA Families ("the League"). The Joint SOA/SFA POW/MIA Committee works closely with the League and supports their ongoing efforts to achieve the fullest possible accounting for our unaccounted-for brothers-in-arms. Family members, veteran organizations and other POW/MIA supporters throughout the country consistently opposed steps to improve economic and political relations with Vietnam until their leadership decided to cooperate fully to resolve the POW/MIA issue.. The League supported a policy of reciprocity – steps by the US to respond to efforts by Vietnam to locate and return remains and provide issue-related archival documents. During the initial stages of the normalization process, important leverage was lost without commensurate results; however, there has since been much greater responsiveness.

One way of viewing what the US knows concerning Vietnam's ability to respond more fully is to look at what US intelligence and other data confirmed at the end of the war. →

At that time, 196 missing Americans were last known alive in captivity or reported alive in close proximity to capture. Vietnam knows that these highest priority cases are directly related to the live prisoner issue and has improved responsiveness, but thus far has accounted for fewer than expected of these Americans by returning identifiable remains. Also, archival documentation is as yet incomplete. In all but very few of these cases, joint field investigations have reportedly been sufficient to confirm death. Logically, if deceased, remains of these Americans should be recoverable, as they were in captivity or on the ground in proximity to Vietnamese forces (other than those who died in captivity in South Vietnam). Also, logically, Vietnam should possess and be able to provide helpful records; thus, recent initiatives by Vietnam to increase working level archival research and records access are encouraging and most welcome.

US wartime and post-war reporting on specific cases, captured Vietnamese documents concerning the handling of US prisoners and casualties, and wartime debriefs of communist Vietnamese captives, reinforced by US-monitored directives and other reporting, form a clear picture of a comprehensive Vietnamese system for collection of information and remains, dating back to the French-Indochina War.

Specific sources, such as the mortician in 1979, substantiated by others in the 1980s, highlighted remains collection and storage as a key aspect of Vietnam's policy leading to eventual discussions with the US. Indeed, through arduous and sustained negotiations, the US and Vietnam reached agreement to return remains of Americans that had been stored for years, though the number repatriated to date has not met well-publicized US Government expectations.

Community-wide intelligence assessments served as the basis for long-standing US estimates that Vietnam could account for hundreds of Americans by unilaterally locating and returning remains.

In 1986-87, the entire intelligence community maintained much higher predictions, but the numbers were subsequently further screened to establish the most realistic targets for Vietnam's government to meet.

During the war and since, the Vietnamese government placed great value on the recovery and/or recording of burial locations of US remains.

In wartime, if jeopardized by imminent discovery or recovery by US forces, burial was immediate in order to hide remains. Subsequently, the remains were disinterred, photographed when possible, then reburied or, when feasible, transferred to Hanoi. Evidence of this relatively complex process was confirmed by US intelligence.

(continued on page 13)

(continued from page 12)

Forensic evidence serves as another basis for establishing expectations. Scientific evidence of above or below ground storage, or both, exists on less than 200 of the 674 identified remains returned from Vietnam since the end of the war in 1975. The count, repeatedly confirmed by DPAA forensic scientists, is far below US expectations, based on reliable intelligence indicating that many more were recovered and stored by the Vietnamese government and could be repatriated, if Vietnam's leadership approved.

After two years of no results from the Vietnamese in 1979-80, during a September 1982 ABC "Nightline" program, the late Vietnamese Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thach denied that Vietnam was holding any US remains, as did other senior officials throughout the Carter Administration.

Vietnam later admitted storage of remains. In 1985, following up an initiative through a regional government, a US National Security Council (NSC) official met privately with a Vietnamese Politburo member during an NSC-led US delegation to Hanoi, in which the League Executive Director participated. The carefully drawn plan was for negotiations on live prisoners and remains, but the minister indicated live prisoners were not on the table for discussion. Rather, as discussed through a third party, the subject was large numbers of remains.

In 1983, Vietnam returned eight remains with clear evidence of storage. Negotiations for a two-year plan in 1985 brought the largest number of remains obtained to that point; nearly all showed evidence of storage. In order to confirm the scope of Vietnam's knowledge, two specific cases were officially presented to officials in Hanoi in 1985-86 with a request for their unilateral assistance. Both losses were judged by the US Government to have occurred inside Laos, in areas under Vietnamese control during the war. One was returned unilaterally in 1988, 98% complete and stored above ground since his 1972 incident along the border between Vietnam and Laos; the other is still missing. From 1985 – 1989, 168 remains were repatriated, the vast majority showing clear evidence of long-term storage. Vietnam has unilaterally repatriated stored remains from Cambodia and very remote locations, not just highly populated areas, relating to incidents spanning the entire war.

There is continuity. In 1991 and 1993, the Vietnamese provided grave registration lists with names of unaccounted-for Americans. Inclusion of these names appears to have been an intentional signal, as was filtering through private channels photographs of dead, unaccounted-for Americans, some of whose remains have yet to be returned.

The Government of Vietnam directed combat photography; their soldiers did not own personal cameras, much less carry them. →

Regardless of mixed or conflicting assessments, these and other actions by Vietnamese officials were apparently intended to signal the US Government of remains availability for diplomatic and/or economic purposes. At the time, remains fragments in Vietnam's possession were not repatriated, believed not to be identifiable, but significant improvements in DPAA's ability to identify very fragmentary remains has dramatically increased.

Information obtained from post-war US field operations reveals that central Vietnamese authorities systematically recovered American remains. Eyewitnesses reported central-level supervision of remains recoveries of US personnel not yet repatriated. Vietnam's leaders have repeatedly pledged to renew and increase their own efforts to locate and return remains and provide relevant documents and have moved incrementally. In recent years, responsiveness has continued to increase, but more needs to be done. Establishment of comprehensive bilateral relations, including strategic dialogue, and increased military-to-military cooperation bodes well for Vietnam to accelerate unilateral efforts to close these historic gaps.

President George W. Bush formalized criteria for steps Vietnam should take unilaterally to be fully responsive on the accounting effort. His March 20, 2002, Certification to Congress was followed and further defined by Secretaries of State Powell and Rice three additional times and, on March 7, 2008, the Bush Administration issued its Determination to Congress stating in part, "...we urge Vietnam to work aggressively to improve tangibly its unilateral provision of POW/MIA-related documents and records, focused initially on archival data pertaining to Americans captured, missing or killed in areas of Laos and Cambodia under wartime Vietnamese control. Vietnam should also focus greater attention on locating and providing information on discrepancy cases with priority on those last known alive in captivity or in immediate proximity to capture, and to locating and repatriating the remains of those who died while in Vietnamese control that have not yet been returned. The United States also calls upon Vietnam to continue permitting our recovery teams to have access to restricted areas for the sole purpose of conducting our humanitarian accounting operations." Vietnam's cooperation has continued to improve, including provision of archival documents. Reportedly, all sensitive areas previously closed to US officials are no longer off-limits, and Vietnamese investigators are now locating and making available witnesses on a regular basis.



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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 8p-12a Karaoke w/Carol
2 Groundhog Day 5:30p Super Bowl Party	3 11a-1:30p Monday Lunch 7p-8p Purple Heart Mtg. 7p-9p Trivia with Paul	4 11a-1:30p Tuesday Lunch 7p-8p 40/8 Meeting	5 11a-1:30p Wednesday Lunch	6 11a-1:30p Thursday Lunch 7p-11p Karaoke w/Howie	7 11a-1:30p Friday Lunch 8p-12a Karaoke w/Paul	8 9a-10a Cmdrs. Breakfast 10a-11a AL Riders Mtg 10:30a-11:30a CVMA Meeting 12:30p-1:30p Marine Corp Mtg 8p-12a Karaoke w/Carol
9 3p-7p Karaoke w/Howie 3p-7p Pot Luck Dinner	10 11a-1:30p Monday Lunch 7p-9p Trivia with Paul	11 11a-1:30p Tuesday Lunch 6p-7p House Comte. Mtg.	12 11a-1:30p Wednesday Lunch 6p-7p Exec. Board Meeting	13 11a-1:30p Thursday Lunch 5:30p-6:30p VVOA Meeting 7p-11p Karaoke w/Howie	14 Valentine's Day 11a-1:30p Friday Lunch 5:30-8:30p Valentine's Dinner 8p-12a Karaoke w/Paul	15 8p-12a Karaoke w/Carol
16 2p-3p SAL Meeting - Sons of the American Legion Meeting 3p-7p Karaoke w/Howie	17 Presidents Day 11a-1:30p Monday Lunch 6p-8p Mbrs. Dnr. and Mtg. - Membership Dinner and Meeting 7p-9p Trivia with Paul	18 11a-1:30p Tuesday Lunch	19 11a-1:30p Wednesday Lunch 5p-6p Comm Cmte Mtg	20 11a-1:30p Thursday Lunch 7p-11p Karaoke w/Howie Open House Membership Drive	21 11a-1:30p Friday Lunch 8p-12a Karaoke w/Paul	22 8p-12a Karaoke w/Carol
23 3p-7p Karaoke w/Howie	24 11a-1:30p Monday Lunch 7p-9p Trivia with Paul	25 11a-1:30p Tuesday Lunch 7p-8p County Meeting	26 11a-1:30p Wednesday Lunch	27 11a-1:30p Thursday Lunch 7p-8p AL 351 Mtg. 7p-11p Karaoke w/Howie	28 11a-1:30p Friday Lunch 8p-12a Karaoke w/Paul	29 8p-12a Karaoke w/Carol

Details on Calendar items are available by clicking on the item at:

<http://www.legion237.com/index.php?id=100>



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