

NEWSLETTER



Ph: 412-653-1555

• 650 Old Clairton Road, Pleasant Hills, PA 15236 •

April 2016

American Legion • Post 712 • Pleasant Hills



LEGION OFFICERS

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Sr. Vice Commander
AL DI LEMBO

Jr. Vice Commander
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Adjutant
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Sgt-At-Arms
STAN TUMAS



Commander's Call

Get out the short sleeve shirts, shorts, and flip flops as it look like Punxsutawney Phil was right on this year. No more cabin fever. Time to put away the shovels, salt and snow blowers as we made it through another dreary cold Winter. I believe Spring is the best time of the year. We can get outdoors and begin working on the plans we all made in the Winter.



Spring is the time of the year when businesses begin to initiate the goals they set for the up-and-coming year. The Legion is no different. We have an action packed agenda for 2016. Before going into a few of this year's projects, I must again address our *Lent-at-the-Legion Fridays*. Hundreds of families and individuals have enjoyed delicious fish dinners at the Legion in February and March. Our Friday results have been "off the chart". We are recording record setting, drastically needed, profits. Profits that go right back to the veterans!

On a Friday, and after the last person has left, the Legion looks like Heinz Field after a Steeler game, yet when you come in Saturday morning the place is spotless. There are many folks who make this happen, who work hard are hardly ever seen by the public due to their work schedule. They might not be visible to us, but that does not mean we can't express our thanks to them for their hard work and dedication. Our Legion members and John Dillion, President of the Legion Riders, and his riders must be mentioned. They have faithfully been present at our Legion meetings and have volunteered at the Lent-at-the Legion every Friday since we began these events. Hundreds of meals have been served and not even one complaint about the food was expressed. Will the entire kitchen crew, waitresses, and bartenders please take a bow? We have no idea as to the number of customers who may attend our next few Friday events, but we will be prepared. With that being said, and if you have a bit of spare time, we would really appreciate it if you would stop by and lend a hand, if needed.

I spoke to as many families from the community as I could - asking them where they heard about us, what they liked about us, and what if any were their dislikes. The folks I spoke to said they not only loved the food, but were impressed with having someone escort and seat them at a table. They especially thanked us for the non-smoking odor in the building during dinner and the friendly atmosphere they experienced each week. Dislikes were few, primarily some stated the wait time was a little long. Unfortunately, fish dinners are very popular during lent causing wait times to be longer than usual in most places that serve food. A few people stated there wasn't enough parking, but said they understood that our lot size is limiting

continued on page 6

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APRIL 2016



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LES BRANCHEN
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Web Master
THAD WEIDMANN

Newsletter Design
DONNA ROTTMAN

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

<p>MAY 7TH at 2:00 Kentucky Derby at 7:00 entertainment by Tony Janflone Jr. & Curtis Swift (Blues Rock)</p>	<p>POST 712 ANNUAL PICNIC Jefferson Park August 20, 2016 Cost: \$5.00 - Cover \$20.00 - Family (more details to follow)</p>	
<p>PENS 3:00 3</p>  <p>Pirate OPENER 1:00 Hot Dogs, Nachos and \$1.00 Drafts</p>	<p>4</p>  <p>• LEGION MEETING 7:00</p>	<p>PENS 7:30 5</p> <p>Happy Hour Mon.- Fri. 4:00 - 7:00 Bucket Special</p> <p>• RIDERS MEETING 7:00</p>
<p>FREE 10</p> <p>POOL 4:00 - Close</p>  <p>FREE JUKE BOX</p>	<p>11</p> <p>Happy Hour Mon.- Fri. 4:00 - 7:00 Buckets of Beer</p> <p>• CORPORATION MEETING 7:00</p>	<p>12</p>  <p>FREE POP CORN</p>
<p>17</p>  <p>FREE Pool & Juke Box 4:00- CLOSE</p>	<p>18</p>  <p>Happy Hour 4 - 7 Buckets of Beer \$7.50 Monday thru Thursday</p>	<p>19</p>  <p>4:00 - 7:00 Bucket Special</p>
<p>24</p> <p>FREE Pool & Juke Box 4:00- CLOSE</p> 	<p>25</p>  <p>Happy Hour 4 - 7 Monday thru Thursday</p> <p>• ALA MEETING 7:00</p>	<p>26</p> <p>HAPPY HOUR Monday thru Thursday from 4:00 - 7:00 Buckets of Beer 4 for \$7.50 (Domestics Only)</p>

Check us out... See what's new every day!

Web site: alpost712pa.org

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APRIL 2016

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

<p>BINGO 7:00 DIFFERENT FOOD SPECIAL EVERY WEEK</p>	<p>DRAFT SPECIALS DURING GAMES</p> 	<p>1</p> <p><i>New Hours</i> 4-8 w/Regular Menu and Stuffed Pork</p>	<p>2</p>  <p>SAL BBQ 4:00 - 7:00 All you can eat Pork Chops & Chicken \$8.95</p>
 <p>6</p> <p>Meatloaf Sandwiches</p>	<p>7</p> <p>PENS - 7:00</p> <p>CORN HOLE</p>	<p>8</p> <p><i>New Hours</i> 4-8 w/Regular Menu and Chicken Romano</p>	<p>9</p>  <p>PENS 3:00</p> <p>FREE JUKE BOX 4:00 - Close</p>
 <p>13</p> <p>Chicken Salad Sandwiches</p>	 <p>14</p> <p>FREE POP CORN</p>	<p>15</p> <p><i>New Hours</i> 4-8 w/Regular Menu and Stuffed Green & Banana Peppers</p>	<p>16</p> <p>Free Pool</p> <p>FREE JUKE BOX 4:00 - Close</p> 
 <p>20</p>  <p>Kielbasa & Kraut</p>	<p>21</p> <p>6:30 CORN HOLE</p>	<p>22</p> <p><i>New Hours</i> 4-8 w/Regular Menu and Lasagna</p>	<p>23</p>  <p>Free Pool</p> <p>FREE JUKE BOX 4:00 - Close</p>
 <p>27</p> <p>Hot Sausage</p>	<p>28</p> <p>Happy Hour 4 - 7</p>  <p>Monday thru Thursday</p> <p>• SAL MURRINE 7:00</p>	<p>29</p> <p><i>New Hours</i> 4-8 w/Regular Menu and Meatloaf, Potatoes & Gravy</p>	<p>30</p>  <p>Entertainment THE JADES BAND 8:00 - 12:00</p>

AMERICAN LEGION POST 712 FEATURES NON-SMOKING ATMOSPHERE IS NOW OPEN TO THE PUBLIC EVERY FRIDAY

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ALA OFFICERS

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ANNE GIOVANNITTI

Chaplain
BARBARA TERIHAY

Sgt-At-Arms
ROSE BREEN

Sgt-At-Arms
DONNA ROTTMAN

Sgt-At-Arms
PAT O'TOOLE

Auxiliary Corner,

Thanks to all of the ALA members who came out to help with the ham and cabbage dinner especially Leigh Ann who spent many hours in the kitchen, on Saturday. Thanks to Karen who made the great posters for us. We had a poor turn out and hope to do better the next time around. We don't have anything planned for April. In May we will be doing poppies with the Post. We will need some of our ladies to volunteer for a couple hours. We will be discussing the "Poppy Sale" at our next meeting which will be on April 25th. Just a reminder that our meetings are always the fourth Monday of the month. Bingo is still being held on Wednesday night. Bring a friend early to enjoy the different menu each week.

God Bless and Protect Our Troops

Mary Ann Marunich, ALA President

POST 712 ANNUAL PICNIC

Jefferson Park
August 20, 2016

Cost: \$5.00 - Cover
\$20.00 - Family
(more details to follow)

Sons of the Legion,

Our hoagie sale was once again very successful. I want to thank the SAL members that gave their time to make the hoagies and Deb Pozycki, Denise Christofel, and Vicky Golden for helping the SAL. We sold 250 hoagies. Thanks for your support.

In March we did our *Annual Feed Five Veterans for Easter*. This Easter we donated the food to the Homeless Shelter on Washington Blvd. They were very happy to receive the food donations. Thanks to all that gave to this worthy cause.

THE SAL and the ALA had an Easter Egg Hunt and Pancake Breakfast for the children in March. It is always fun to see the children enjoy this event.

April Events:

April 2nd – Pork Chop and Chicken Dinner – \$8.95

ALL YOU CAN EAT from 4:00pm to 7:00pm

Next meeting – April 28th at 7:00pm.

Gary C. Hartman
Commander of the SAL



SAL OFFICERS

Commander
GARY HARTMAN

Sr. Vice Commander
DON W. GOULDER

Jr. Vice Commander
DON J. GOULDER

Adjutant
JAMES CHRISTOFEL

Finance Officer
RICHARD HARTMAN

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Assistant Treasurer
BILL WEIKEL

Adjutant
LLOYD RAY

Chaplain
MARK SMITH

American Legion Riders,

Spring has sprung, 'bout time!

The inaugural year of the Fish Fry has proven to be an unqualified success for the membership and our community. Most recently, Riders who volunteered their time to support the Fish Fry are Bill and Donna Allan, Tom and Chris Bodner; John Caligiuri, John and Susan Dillon, Ed Harmon, Deborah Hromanik, Tom Matthews, Dan Oehler and Dave Saunier. The Fish Fry not only supports the Post and Veterans, but also helps to cement the American Legion as an active and thriving resource for Veterans and families in our community. Well done to our volunteers and employees alike!

Save the Date: April 23rd is the *Mingo Rod and Gun Club* annual Howard Van Gorp Shoot to support the Fisher House, which is co-sponsored by Mon Valley ABATE. A fun day of trap, pistol poker and food, with proceeds supporting the Fisher House of Pittsburgh. If you would like more details talk to any Rider's Officer.

Gettysburg Ride: Kevin Jackson's Gettysburg Ride is scheduled for **June 25th – 27th**. Make your hotel reservations now if you have not already done so. See Kevin or any Officer for details.

Foxburg Winery Ride: Mark Smith's Foxburg Winery Ride is scheduled for **July 23rd**. Save the date, this is a great ride.

Flight 93 Memorial Ride: Our annual ride to benefit the Fisher House is scheduled for Sunday, **August 14th**. We ride to the Flight 93 Memorial to remember those who fought back on this fateful day 15 years ago. Cars and trucks are welcome. More details to follow. Lloyd Ray is working on the patch and pin design to be used for the ride. If anybody would like to contribute their ideas please go direct with Lloyd.

Military Etiquette:

Officer: Soldier, do you have change for a dollar?

Solider: Sure buddy.

Officer: That's no way to address an officer! Now let's try it again. Do you have change for a dollar?

Soldier: No SIR.

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Riders will be 1900 hours, **Tuesday, April 5th**. All members and perspective members are encouraged to attend.

Hooah,
Top

Mark your calendar
Annual Benefit Ride
Sunday, August 14th

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Commander's Call continued from page 1

the amount of vehicles we could accommodate during peak times.

The advertisement starts with signs posted on the pole at 650 Old Clairton Road (Our Legion), articles written in the Messenger, postings in the Pleasant Hills Boro Facebook and on our Post Facebook pages as well, the KDKA 2016 Fish Fry Guide and the South Hills Record. Each of these media help us to gain exposure in the communities.

By the middle of March, we had an increase in membership, with a combined total of approx. 20 folks (new and transferred members to the Legion, SAL, ALA and Social Members) join our Legion. If you came to the Legion on one of these Fridays, then you noticed the Legion was filled with people laughing, smiling, and just plain enjoying themselves having a good time. What a success! We are not going to let our foot off the gas. It will be pedal to the metal. We "listen" to what our customers want, so beginning in April and every Friday thereafter, from 3pm to 8pm, the Legion will be Non-Smoking. Food will be served from 4-8 p.m. Every month we will "feature" food from different times.

Currently, we are working on a few "firsts" for the Legion. Details will follow as soon as they are finalized. Reaching out to education within our community, we will be offering two Oratorical Achievement Awards to one senior male and one senior female student from Thomas Jefferson High School. This is a tedious task. We have had meetings with a counselor from TJHS sharing our ideas regarding the structure of the awards, the topic of the awards, and the judging of the awards. We will be seeking panel members from our Legion to be a part of this exciting project.

Another project that our Sr. Vice and Adjutant are working on is a dinner that will be dedicated to honor our World War II Era and our Korean War Era Vets. This will be a major event for us, especially because we can never thank them enough for all that they have done for us and for our country. I know U. S. Senator Guy Reschenthaler and made a call to his office with the intention of asking if he would attend the event and be our speaker – speaking from the position of Veteran-to-Veteran, not as a politician.

Senator Reschenthaler is a member of our Post. His bio speaks for itself. We will be uploading his bio in the newsletter closer to this event so you can see all that he has accomplished in his Naval Officer career. When I called his office and asked to speak to him, his aide asked the nature of my call. I began to explain who I was and share a little about the event with him. Before I could get even half-way through my talk, his aide stated that Guy wouldn't miss this recognition of veterans for the world. We plan to have newspaper and possibly TV coverage for this event. I would like to ask all of our WWII and Korean War Vets to contact the adjutant to assure we have your correct address, phone number and email address.

Another event we will be looking into will be an outside event such as a pig roast. There are numerous areas to investigate regarding this project, but I assure you it will be exciting. Many ideas come from our members. As we receive more ideas we will investigate each one of them. Call me, email me, or drop a message in the suggestion box in the lobby if you have any ideas for the betterment of the Legion. Our Post is gaining notoriety from many new venues.

Membership is still a very important part of our mission. Each month we attend the District Meetings, membership quotas and goals are discussed verbally for each Post. I would like to thank our members who have paid their 2016 dues to date. Because of you, we are at a 97% rating. Thank you to the members who have already recruited others to join our Legion those of you whose enthusiasm was so contagious, others felt it, and they also joined. I hope everyone can clearly see that as I stated at my installation ceremony on August 4, 2015, American Legion Post 712 is on the move and we are just getting started. As always we continue to support our troops.

Richard J. Wojnar

"R & R"

(Rest & Relaxation)

Alfred DiLembo

Sr. Vice Commander

Scott Walsh

David Nicklas

AGIA INSURANCE: \$5,000.00 ACCIDENT PROTECTION LEGION MEMBER-ONLY BENEFIT

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1-800-235-6943
- Register online at:
<https://www.thelit.com/no-cost-legioncare>

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AMERICAN LEGION POST 712 FEATURES NON-SMOKING ATMOSPHERE; IS NOW OPEN TO THE PUBLIC EVERY FRIDAY

Beginning April 1, 2016 and continuing on every Friday from 4-8 PM, the American Legion Post 712 in Pleasant Hills will feature a non-smoking environment along with open-to-the-public dinners from 4-8 p.m. Due to the overwhelming response from our Lent-at-the-Legion Fridays, the Legion members have decided to make every Friday a non-smoking, open-to-the-public event from 4-8 p.m. You are welcome to eat in or take-out food. Call 412-653-1555 to order take-outs. Each month our kitchen will feature a specialty meal along with our regular Friday menu.

After visiting the Legion on three open-to-the-public occasions, we hope you will want to become a member of our Legion. The Legion is located at 650 Old Clairton Road in Pleasant Hills. Having a dinner at the Legion is a great way to support your veterans! Hope to see you there!

Renew Your Legion Membership Online

- Submit payment of your annual membership dues.
- Eliminate paper renewal notices by setting your account to have your notices delivered via email.
- If you are already paid for the current year, you can set your account for automatic renewal using your credit/debit card.
- Have your Legion membership card readily available when you login online.
- The Post receives reimbursement in a timely manner.
- Excellent way to avoid numerous PAST DUE Notices.
- Access the following website to renew your membership online:
<http://www.legion.org/renew>

POST 712 to HONOR OUR WWII and KOREAN WAR ERA VETERANS in 2016

Post 712 will honor our Legion members who have served in WWII and the Korean War Eras. More information will follow in upcoming newsletters. We would encourage all WWII Veterans and Korean War Veterans to be sure we have your current phone number and email address on file. To update your phone number or email call 412-616-1834 or send an email to adjpost712@verizon.net.

A GREAT OPPORTUNITY

I recently attended the CPR and Heimlich maneuver class that Frank Caputo arranged for our post. The classes are open to the public. The cost of the class is \$10.00. It is the best \$10.00 I have ever spent. Anyone who is a parent, grandparent or have senior citizen parents in their care should take this class. It covers infants to senior citizens. What a great feeling it would be to save the life of a love one or a friend. I feel more confident when baby sitting and or among friends. I would highly recommend this class to our members and their families and friends.

... **THINK ABOUT IT**

Don Rottman, Jr. Vice Commander

LOCAL HERO HONORED

It seems the word "hero" is used way too often. Just because you served your country does not make you a hero. *Navy Seal Petty Officer 1st Class Nicolas D. Checque*, 28 of Monroeville, PA is a true hero when he received the Navy Cross posthumously. Senior Chief Special Warfare Operator Edward Byers was awarded the Medal of Honor at the White House on March 2, 2016.

Directly after the ceremony Byers said, "He was an American hero of that operation. He died a warrior he died to bring back another American held in captivity".

RIP. Petty Officer 1st Class, Nicolas D. Checque

Don Rottman, Jr. Vice Commander

CPR Classes are filling up fast

Call 412-616-1834

Next class . . .

April 13 from 6-8:30 PM

to be held at the Legion Post 712

Cost: \$10 Per Person

Class Size: Min. 6 - Max. 12

call 412-616-1834

or sign up at the bar

TAPS



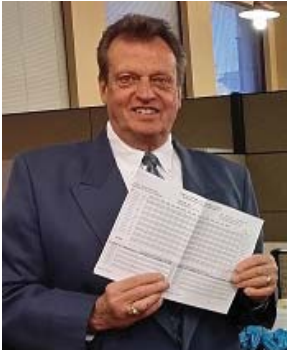
With Honor and Gratitude

We Remember. . .

PHIL CYWINSKI

3/2016

May you Rest in Peace my Friend.



OUR HEROES

**YOU'RE IN THE ARMY NOW
... WELL, MAYBE NOT!**

RICH WOJNAR
Commander Post 712

In July, 1964, I reported to the Army recruiter in Charleroi, PA. At that time, it was required that all high school graduates enter the Draft. I listened to his sales pitch and said that I would think about it without notifying my family. Well, about a week later I returned and asked what about the next step. The next step was to take a series of tests that would measure my intellectual ability. The following week my parents asked me if I had spoken to an Army recruiter. I asked "why" and they replied "because he called and said my test results were in". After he went over the results with me, the recruiter told me that I had scored well above the norm and suggested that I might want to go to listen to the Army Security Agency Recruiter who was located in Pittsburgh, PA. Driving to the "city" was a "big thing" back then and not like it is today.

The recruiter stated that the ASA was a highly confidential agency that even he could not explain. He stated that I will be in the Army, but not really in the Army. It was then that I learned the ASA reported to the National Security Agency (NSA) and not directly to the Army. He also said by choosing the ASA I would sign on to a four-year commitment. Not knowing what the military was all about the ASA sounded like a "cool thing". After speaking to the ASA recruiter, I decided to enlist.



On August 27, 1964, I was off to Ft. Dix, NJ for basic training. That evening, I spent the night in a Pittsburgh hotel (to assure I would be on the train the next morning) and traveled by train the next morning to Newark, NJ. From Newark, I traveled by bus to Ft. Dix, NJ. I arrived at night at one of the gates at Fr. Dix, NJ. Now I was on my own! An MP driving a jeep stopped me and asked me what I was doing walking around. I showed him the paperwork I was carrying and he said, "I know exactly where you are going." The next thing I know I was standing in line with hundreds of guys. With my shirt off, two medics, one on each side of me, began firing shots in both arms using air guns. Next I went to a holding company to wait for the next basic training company to begin.

While in basic training, I remember one morning, after our calisthenics were done, a soldier walked up to the drill instructor and handed him a sheet of paper with a few names on it. Our drill instructor yelled out the four names listed on the paper with one of the names being mine. We were told to "fall out" of formation and to go with this soldier. We got into a van. The soldier hopped into the driver's seat, looking back at us saying, "You four are the ASA guys, right?" We answered "yes" and then we were escorted to another training building. When we arrived at this training center we were led into a room that had padded chairs, small couches, and tables with various magazines on them. The soldier told us to relax and read the magazines if we so desired. After a short while, we began to get a bit ancy wondering what was next. Approx. one hour later, we noticed the same soldier had returned to the room and looked as though he

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was making an exit. We asked him if we should be doing something. He said just for us sit back and relax. He then said they were lucky to get us out of that crazy basic training for at least a day. He went on to say that the Army Security Agency takes care of their own!

After basic, I attended ASA Morse Code Interceptor School (called “the bird cage”) in Ft. Devens, Mass. The training was rigorous and failure wasn’t an option. We learned that the recruiter may have forgotten to tell us that if we failed out of any ASA training, we would still have to honor our four-year commitment and would be placed wherever we were needed in the Regular Army. In order to graduate, you had to pass a final Morse code test, copying 20 groups/minute of varied dit’s and dah’s (dots and dashes) with 100% accuracy – yes, zero mistakes. A “group” consisted of five letters, numbers or special characters. For our exams, students were seated in two rows, about ten deep, with their headsets plugged into a receptacle in the front of their desk. The code was sent via code transmitter/recorders and your typing had to be exact! Each group had to be separated by a space. After five groups, a double space was required, followed by five more groups. The code was copied on a “mill”. A mill was basically a typewriter that only has capital letter keys and the paper was “tractor fed” around the platen. Getting to type 20 groups/minute was not as easy as I had thought. We started out typing one letter at a time, one number at a time, and then one special character at a time. There were mini tests every day with a large test every Friday. If you failed the Friday test you attended a one day remedial session and retested the next day. Those who failed a second time were never seen again at school. All day and all night the “dits” (.) and “dahs” (-) echoed loudly in our heads. Upon graduation, I was able to copy 20 groups/minute. Even today, after all these years, I am still proficient at copying code at 35 groups/minute.

After approx. 15 months of training, I had orders to go to Kagnew Station in Asmara, Ethiopia. This tour would last a year and a half without R & R. When I departed the U. S., I was issued two passports which seemed a bit strange to me. A month or so later, I found out that one passport was for my personal use and the other passport stated I was on official business for the U. S. Government. This passport was to be used in the event my job function was compromised and I was being detained by a foreign government. The mission in Ethiopia was nothing short of being the most complicated job I could ever imagine, but also the most interesting job with folks counting on your expertise at the most critical moments in the history of that time period. As a Morse code interceptor I was involved with everything from our Gemini Space Mission to all phases of the Cold War. While Russia topped the list of countries we copied, I was involved in activities that may still be considered classified today. We never talked about what we were involved in, not even with each other. At that time, we were briefed that talking to anyone regarding our job duties was grounds for immediate imprisonment, no questions asked, as all of our daily activities were classified as Top Secret Cryptographic. Talking about our mission would put our government in an embarrassing and negative position by our allies and guaranteed to be a one way ticket to prison.



The Cold War was a very delicate assignment. When we intercepted various targets we put our finished copies called “traffic” thru a slot in a door at the front of our room. Who got it and where it went was none of our business. Just like in school, the rooms were long with 10-15 operators on one side of the room and 10-15 operators on the other side. An operator’s “position” consisted of a gray desk with a mill on it and behind the mill there was a slot in the rear of the

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desk for the 5-ply paper to be fed. To the left of the operator, side-by-side, were two radios either R390's or R390A's. Over the top of the receivers were two small containers that could swing back and forth. In the event our building came under attack, the containers were to be opened and the contents spilled over the receivers. The acid in these containers would partially destroy the equipment, making the equipment inoperable. Our building was called "Tract C". Tract C was a single floor building surrounded by over 2500 acres of antennas including deep dish space antennas. Walking through the halls of Tract C, there were 3-4 identical rooms (in size and shape), and each room was filled with operators who wore their headsets around their neck (instead of over their ears with the reason being many of the targets were hundreds and hundreds of miles away and if the headsets covered their ears and a storm with a lightning strike erupted anywhere between the operator and his target the sound through the headsets would be like going to a firing range without ear protection which might result in permanent ear damage. When you walked past these rooms all you would hear is the chirping from the headsets of the 60+ operators who were copying various targets. When we were in school, we copied "canned" code, or code that was near perfect, as it was sent via transmitters.



It was in the field where you got the real education because humans were sending code to one another, not even close to the perfectly canned code we copied, and I was intercepting their signals. Some code was absolutely horrible where you had to ride "side saddle" with a seasoned operator in order for you to decipher what the sender was sending. Both of you copied the same target. Once you showed that both of your copies of traffic matched, then you were on your own. This might take up to three weeks. The seasoned operator was not able to relocate back to the states until his replacement was proficient.

When the U. S. launched the Gemini rocket, we immediately began tracking the capsule. Usually the mission could only be tracked when the capsule was in our "window" of communication. The communication window was the time period when the capsule was coming into our tracking range. Our tracking range was roughly from the middle of the Pacific Ocean to areas of Eastern Asia. Once the capsule went to the backside of the earth, we normally should have lost transmission. We never lost transmission from the capsule due to the deep dish antennas around the world, the Advanced Range Instrumentation Aircraft (ARIA), and along with other monitoring methods. The aircrafts were C-135 Stratolifters that were modified for various space missions. They flew 24 hours/day and seven days a week. There were also various islands around the world that were equipped with deep dish space antennas. Another reason we never lost communication was because the capsule transmissions were bounced between various aircraft and the deep dish antennas all over the world.

My part began when the capsule flew into our window. There was one country specifically that sent out sound waves in order to jam certain frequencies so that the U.S. would lose communications with the capsule. While there was an attempt to jam the signals other classified frequencies were also being utilized. We would listen to the astronauts speaking to Mission Control located in Houston, Texas and Goddard Flight Center in Green Belt, Maryland.

Following my year and half in Ethiopia, I returned to the states. My next station was at Vint Hill Farms lo-

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cated in Northern Virginia. Without getting into details, Viet Nam was a main priority of the United States. Our mission was conducted 24hrs/day, seven days a week. There was absolutely no down time. It was imperative that we completed our mission – minute-by-minute as soldiers' lives may depend on it. I worked in a building called "The Barn". It was an actual farm barn with two floors. The bottom floor was equipped with very large Mincom recorders (6' x 3' wide). As I recall, there were about six of them. We needed these reel-to-reel recorders for their "playback" function. We didn't use them to record any data. The reels were approx. 2' in diameter. The data on these reels were recorded from search positions deep in the jungles of Viet Nam. Intel was also gathered by small planes and helicopters. Once this data was captured, it was uncertain to us as to how they got onto these reels. The reels were then time stamped and immediately flown to an undisclosed location in the states on a daily basis, and then driven by an unmarked courier to Vint Hill Farms – straight to the Barn.

We received these reels daily. By the time I reached Vint Hill Farms, I had achieved the rank of Specialist 5th Class (Spec 5) and I was placed in the position of Room Supervisor. My assignment was to supervise the tape section. Two recorders ran 365 days a year, 24 hours a day and the tapes were changed in a staggered rotation changing one recorder every hour. We had four back-up recorders in the event of a recorder failure. The upper floor of the Barn was filled with Morse code operators in the same basic room format as it was in Ethiopia - same desks- same headsets and two side-by-side receivers to the left of each operator. Here is the big difference! The receivers to their left were Rycom Receivers, not R390's. So what is the difference? The giant Mincom Recorders on the first floor were feeding the "taped" signals to the top floor and the Rycom Receivers were scanning the data on the tapes. It felt exactly as though you were sitting in the jungles of Viet Nam copying the code live, although we were a day late copying this information. Their targets sent code using a certain frequency that never changed whether you copied that target off of a tape in the states or live in the jungles of Viet Nam. The enemy sent messages back and forth to each other via Morse code while we were intercepting those messages.



In late January, 1968, the USS Pueblo was seized in international waters near Korea and a portion of our communications went silent. We had direction finding stations located in numerous areas in Viet Nam. They moved to various sites when it was believed their presence was being compromised. We tracked enemy movement, via our linguists, on a wall-sized map of Viet Nam using various colored push-pins. This map was also not privy to all of our own operators. This was also the method used when we tracked what we thought may be massive amounts of North Vietnamese troop movement. When we believed these enemy troops were assembling in certain areas, we alerted yet another entity this time in our civilian chain of command that an enemy operation may be imminent. The only significant draw-back of this system that this was not a "live" mission as our data was a day late.

Everyone close to this mission took it more seriously than just another day at work. Every day we would come in wondering what happened the day before and by some miracle did we make a difference? Even today when I see various stories relating to the soldiers in Viet Nam I always wonder if that soldier was alive because of our mission. I guess I will never know, but one thing for sure is that I will never forget! One thing to remember is that the Army Security Agency Personnel were National Security Agency Personnel, but in uniform. If interested, Google Army Security Agency, Kagnev Station, Vint Hill Farms and Asmara Stone House.