Masonic Charity
In A Time Of Crisis

"Top Gun: Maverick"
Saved By A Mason
See Pages 15-17

What Will Your Masonic Legacy Be?
See Page 11

GUEST COLUMN: Masons, Morphine, Coca Cola and Cocaine
See Pages 19-20
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Back Cover: Grand Lodge Store

FORM FOR CHANGING ADDRESS FOR MESSENGER

TYPE or PRINT information requested and mail to the
Grand Lodge address on the back cover.

Name in Full
Lodge Name and Number

If you have moved, PLEASE RETURN YOUR ADDRESS LABEL ABOVE TO THE GRAND LODGE OF GEORGIA along with your new address:

Lodge Name and Number
Street or P.O. Box
City
Zip Code

Brethren, it is your responsibility to make certain your address is current. Be certain your Lodge secretary has your correct address. Current addresses are kept in the Grand Secretary’s Office in Macon.

The Editor of the Masonic Messenger DOES NOT keep a list of addresses.
Important Notices

2020 District Conventions

1st District  POSTPONED  Savannah @ Scottish Rite Building  Host: Landrum Lodge No. 48
2nd District  POSTPONED  Albany @ Albany Lodge No. 24  Host: Albany Lodge No. 24
3rd District  POSTPONED  Pinchurst @ Millwood Lodge No. 198  Host: Millwood Lodge No. 198
4th District  August 15, 2020  9:45 AM  Greenville @ Greenville Lodge No. 321  Host: Centralhatchee Lodge No. 403
5th District  September 12, 2020  10:00 AM  Alpharetta @ Alpharetta Lodge No. 235  Host: Alpharetta Lodge No. 235
6th District  May 2, 2020  9:00 AM  Griffin @ Meridian Sun Lodge No. 26  Host: Rutland Lodge No. 298
7th District  May 8 & 9, 2020  9:00 AM  Rome @ Cherokee Lodge No. 66  Host: Cherokee Lodge No. 66
8th District  May 16, 2020  9:00 AM  Elberton @ Philomathea Lodge No. 25  Host: Nancy Hart Lodge No. 690
9th District  September 26, 2020  9:00 AM  Marietta @ The Keheley Center Activities Building  Host: Hickory Flat Lodge No. 205
10th District  June 13, 2020  10:00 AM  Augusta @ Martinez Lodge No. 710  Host: Martinez Lodge No. 710
11th District  September 19, 2020  10:00 AM  Waycross @ Waycross Lodge No. 305  Host: Waycross Lodge No. 305
12th District  POSTPONED  Lyons @ Lyons Lodge No. 49  Host: Lyons Lodge No. 49

Special Announcement from the Association of Blue Lodge Ambassadors:
Because of the Coronavirus National Emergency and due to the abundance of caution for the safety of the Masonic Home children, staff, and those that might attend, the annual Masonic Home Workday which was planned for April 25th HAS BEEN CANCELLED and will be rescheduled at a later date.

GA/SC Exchange: June 12th @ 6 pm Greenville Scottish Rite Building 817 Cleveland St. Greenville, SC 29601 with a meal and activity to follow.

We have been invited by MW Grand Master Cal Disher, GM of SC and MW Grand Master Johnie Garmon, GM of GA. The South Carolina brethren will come in force, trying to beat our attendance record from last year. Georgia Masons need to travel well and beat them on their home turf.

Special coins will be presented on Friday evening, after the meal. The GA/SC Exchange is a big deal and the fellowship is superb, make your plans to bring a truck load.

Be on the lookout for changes coming to your Masonic Messenger. The Publications Committee is in discussions with our publisher, Panaprint, to change the publication of the Masonic Messenger from Bimonthly to quarterly; going from 32 to 48 pages. This will result in a cost savings of over $17,000. A specific date for transition has not been determined. Your Publications Committee is always working to improve your Masonic Messenger and we ask for your input on what you would like to see included in the magazine. Do not hesitate to contact me at coffeybr@gmail.com.

Brian Coffey, Second Grand Steward
Chairman, Publications Committee
Officer Installations for 2020

FERGUS LODGE NO. 135

ALLEGHENY LODGE NO. 114

STRICT OBSERVANCE LODGE NO. 18

DALLAS LODGE NO. 182

PANTHERSVILLE LODGE NO. 543
Our Masonic Home Superintendent John Snipes would like to thank Brother Frank Worley for his generous donation to the Georgia Masonic Children’s Home. He is a member of Strict Observance Lodge No. 18. Thank you Brother!

Adel Lodge No. 310 recently presented a $400.00 check to the Boys and Girls Club for Toys for Tots.

Flint Hill Blessed with Masonic Artwork: Recently pictures were donated to Flint Hill Masonic Lodge by Dana Jones Wynn, boss of Brother Brian Jones. Mrs. Wynn is the owner of Jones Wynn funeral home and crematory. Mrs. Wynn’s late husband Charles Wynn was a member of Villa Rica Lodge, and these photos were his. Mrs. Dana was also a member of the Order of the Eastern Star. On the photos are two plaques one which reads: In Memory of Charles Wynn, and on the other: In honor of Dana Jones Wynn. Charles was a great man and pillar of the west Georgia community, as is Mrs. Dana.

Chatsworth Honors Three-Time Past Master: Recently, Worshipful Brother James King was presented a plaque for serving as Worshipful Master three times for Chatsworth Lodge #664. Worshipful Brother King most recently finished up a term as Master of Chatsworth Lodge in 2019 at the young age of 84! Congratulations Worshipful Brother!

Deputy Grand Master Roast Gun Raffle Winner, WB John Absher, Worshipful Master to the 9th Masonic District. The presentation by Most Worshipful Brother Johnie M. Garmon and the DGM ROAST Committee.

On February 8th, 2020, a snowy day in Barrow County, Auburn Lodge No. 230 held Annual Past Masters Night. W.M. Randy Waldrip was astounded by the turn out. Auburn Lodge has 70 Master Masons and 25 showed up for this meeting, making it an excellent night of fellowship with his Brothers.
Knights Templar Educational Foundation Awards Grant: The Knights Templar Educational Foundation Trustees, the investment arm of the Grand Commandery, Knights Templar, of the State of Georgia, awarded $50,000.00 each to Emory University and Augusta University Ophthalmology Departments at their annual luncheon on February 7, 2020. Dr. Allen Beck, Chair and Director, Emory Eye Center, and Dr. Lane Ulrich, Interim Chair, Department of Ophthalmology, Augusta University, were present at the luncheon to receive their respective grants. Each professor gave an update on their current research initiatives. Each university sponsors a Knights Templar Educational Foundation/Dr. Fleetwood Maddox Chair in Ophthalmology. The $50,000.00 research grants are the KTEF’s contribution to the maintenance of these two cutting-edge research chairs. The Knights Templar of Georgia are pleased to continue to assist these two leading-edge research universities in their endeavors to alleviate infant ophthalmology diseases.

Widow’s Sons Sponsor Santa Ride: In December, a group of Georgia Masons answered the call to help out some great kids. The Lion’s Paw Chapter of the Widow’s Sons sponsored a Santa Ride for the Home of Hope at the Gwinnett Children Shelter. The Santa Ride was a caravan of over 40 motorcycles leading the way for a visit from Jolly ‘ole Saint Nick.

“We are so proud to have the involvement of the Widows Son’s. Each year, our kids look so forward to this event. They love to line up to see the parade of motorcycles and to have fun with the Masons,” said Barry Sanders, Board member of the Home of Hope. The Widow’s sons brought a gift for each child and Santa had time to share with each child. The extra-large candy canes that each child received were a big hit as well! Most notably was that it was a sight to see these burly, leather clad Masons moved to tears as the children opened their gifts. The Widow’s Sons also had lunch with the children and their mothers to get to know the kids on a personal level.

The Home of Hope is a homeless children’s shelter in Gwinnett county that helps moms and their kids move from homeless to permanent housing. The Home of Hope has always shared a great relationship with Georgia Masons and would welcome any Lodge to come visit to learn more about the shelter.

Sandgnat Degree Team of Camden Lodge #476 Confers Enter Apprentice Degree: WB Alvah E. Milton II Worshipful Master of Screven Lodge #368 requested the Sandgnat Degree Team of Camden Lodge #476 to confer the EA degree for 3 candidates on February 20, 2020 at Screven Lodge #368. The Worshipful Master of Camden Lodge #476 WB Ed De Leo lead along with WB Harrel Smith, the Sandgnat degree team leader, traveled to Screven lodge and conferred the EA degrees. The Sandgnat degree team was welcomed by the brethren of Screven Lodge to a hardy meal and great hospitality. The Sandgnat degree team was so honored by having in attendance the First Grand Steward WB Bill Shepard, of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of F & AM of Georgia.
Association of Blue Lodge Ambassadors

Amity Program

The ABLA Amity Program, formerly known as the Adoption Program, is in essence a method by which the Lodges of the Grand Lodge of Georgia may take special interest in a particular child at the Masonic Children's Home. This is an informal relationship, whose success will depend upon the dedication of the Lodge in regards to its relationship with the child. Upon expressing interest of the Program, the Lodge should contact Superintendent John Snipes, who will "assign" a child to the Lodge. The following policies and regulations will apply:

1. Visitors must always notify Social Services in the main office of the Home and House Parents when coming to visit children.
2. When making plans to leave campus with a child (ie: movie, shopping, out to dinner, etc), please make the child's House Parent aware of your plans by 9:00pm on Wednesday. Children’s weekend plans are approved at weekly staff meeting on Thursday mornings.
3. When leaving campus with a female child, you must be accompanied by your spouse or other adult female companion.
4. Letters, birthday cards and phone calls are permitted. Child must be on appropriate level to receive calls. Check with the child's houseparent for the best time to call.
5. Please note that before any off campus outings can be made, a certified records check must be obtained from your local Law Enforcement Agency. This will be needed for each individual that will be accompanying a child. Please allow an appropriate amount of time for processing. These record checks will be kept on file.
6. Regarding monetary gifts: Please limit birthday gifts to $25.00, any other monetary gifts should not exceed $10.00 per month.

It is hoped that every Lodge in the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of Georgia will participate in the program.

We truly appreciate your interest in your Masonic Home children.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact
Scott Radcliffe, ABLA Amity Program Director
770-367-4361
abla.ga1905@gmail.com

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<th>District</th>
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<th>% Participating</th>
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Brothers, the Amity Program is a program created by the Association of Blue Lodge Ambassadors to the Masonic Home of Georgia (ABLA), whereby individual subordinate lodges may "adopt" one of the children at the Home. Some of you are aware of this program, but many of you are not. In an effort to inform you about this program and to hopefully increase participation, we will begin including this summary table of statistics in each issue of the Messenger. Essentially, what adoption entails is choosing, as a lodge, to develop a relationship with a child (or children) at the Home and take an interest in them. Reach out to them on their birthday, at Christmas, and other holidays; visit them when you're at or near the home; and stay in touch with them throughout the year. I suppose the best analogy would be to treat the relationship as you would with a niece or nephew. It does not require any great financial commitment, just a genuine interest and a caring heart. For more information on the Amity Program or the Children's Home in general, please reach out to your lodge or district ambassador and he will be happy to assist you.
TWELTH ANNUAL YORK RITE FESTIVAL
MOST WORSHIPFUL GRAND MASTER’S CLASS
APRIL 4th, 2020

Has been POSTPONED with no reschedule date at this time.

2020 GEORGIA GRAND YORK RITE SESSIONS
RESCHEDULED: May 28 - May 30, 2020
Location-Grand Chapter Building
811 Mulberry Street, Macon, GA 31201

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

• A Joint Memorial/Divine Service will be held @4:00pm, on Thursday, May 28th
• Grand York Rite Banquet will be @ 6:30pm on Thursday, May 28th
• Grand Commandery will open @ 7:30am on Friday, May 29th
• Grand Chapter RAM will open after lunch on Friday, May 29th
• Grand Council RSM will open @ 8:00am on Saturday, May 30th
• Installations of Grand Line Officers will be held during the body’s respective session
• The Grand York Rite Session will conclude on Tuesday morning and will not continue through to Wednesday as has been done in the past
• The York Rite Presiding Officer degrees such as the Order of the High Priesthood for Past High Priests, the Order of the Silver Trowel for Past Illustrious Masters and the Knight Crusader of the Cross for Past Eminent Commanders will be conferred on MAY 30, 2020 beginning at 3:00pm at the Grand Chapter building.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: Mark Bradley, Grand Recorder/Secretary for the York Rite - email: markbradley@yorkriteofga.org; or the office @ 478-742-2557
NOW IS THE TIME TO BECOME A 32° MASON

$100 Orient Wide Reunion

EDUCATION

4° 32°

Freemasonry is an art of a great compass and extent. A knowledge of its mysteries is not attained at once, but by degrees.

PHILANTHROPY

BROTHERHOOD

SCHOLARSHIPS

Any Valley in the Orient of Georgia, for the 2020 Spring Reunion! Turn in your Petition Today!

Spring Reunion 2020 Dates
Valley of Albany (229-432-6939) - Jan 31 & Feb 1
Valley of Atlanta (404-873-3659) POSTPONED
Valley of Augusta (706-733-5387) - May 1 & 2
Valley of Columbus (706-322-3091) - May 15 & 16
Valley of Middle Georgia (478-745-4025) POSTPONED
Valley of Savannah (912-232-5132) - POSTPONED

Turn in your petition to any Scottish Rite Mason today!

If you are a member in need of Reinstatement, or do not have a 2020 Dues card, it only takes the current years Dues to become a Member in Good Standing once again! Contact your Valley Secretary for details.
On October 28, 1869, Live Oak Lodge #137 was granted a Charter from the Grand Lodge of Georgia, Free and Accepted Masons. At the time of its Charter, the city of Darien was undergoing extreme hardship since it’s burning in 1863 (Darien was burned by U.S. Colonel and abolitionist James Montgomery who ordered the town's destruction because it was undefended and convenient, though the burning came to be seen—even in the North—as excessive. Keep in mind this was a year prior to Sherman’s March to the Sea). Though the town’s residents had abandoned Darien, it had sent three Companies of men to fight for the Southern Cause and only about fifty of the three-hundred sent returned. Of those who did return a large number were involved in chartering the Lodge. The Lodge provided a real opportunity to collectively help the city and county to recover from the devastating fire in 1863 and the other problems.

Since it’s chartering, Live Oak Lodge No. 137 has had a proud tradition with its contributions politically, socially, economically, and commercially to Darien and its members have been prime movers in the aforementioned areas and are still contributing to this day.

For example, the Lodge's first Worshipful Master was the Reverend Robert F. Clute, Rector of St. Andrews Episcopal Church in Darien. Adam Strain, one of the founders of the Lodge was a very successful merchant, President of the Darien Bank, and President of the Darien and Western Railroad. Sheriff Tom Poppell who was a member of our Lodge until his passing, and his brother Adam Strain Poppell, Jr. (who is known locally as “Junior”), was a 65 years member of our Lodge. “Junior” served as Clerk of McIntosh County Courts and on the tax assessors board. Their father, Adam Strain Poppell, served as sheriff of the county until 1948. Dan White was the County Attorney for years until his passing and was also a State Representative, to mention a few.

On October 26, 2019, at 11 am, Live Oak Lodge celebrated its 150th Anniversary with a program, special guests, and light refreshments. The Worshipful Master and Officers held a grand celebration with many in attendance including Most Worshipful Grand Master Johnnie Garmon and Past Most Worshipful Grand Master Clyde Griffin.
We come to Freemasonry for many reasons, it could be a family tradition, curiosity, or the earnest desire to better ourselves as men. For whatever reason we join we take upon ourselves several types of obligations, two especially that I wish to discuss. First, that obligation to the betterment of ourselves and how we are to treat others of the human family, this is that outward sign of how the tenets of Freemasonry have made a positive influence in our lives. Second, is an obligation to the institution of Freemasonry itself by virtue of the Lodge we join, which is both a commitment of our time and of our finances. Our personal commitment comes in many forms; as Master of the Lodge, as an officer, committees, upkeep of the Lodge and grounds, flipping pancakes or just in your attendance at the stated meetings and of course the payment of our dues.

These are only good as long as we live and remain faithful to the Craft. At death, the service to our Lodge ends, after many years of dedication we become a picture on the wall or even worse soon forgotten. But there is a way, Brethren, to continue our support of our Lodge and Freemasonry after we have laid down the working tools of our mortal existence. The Perpetual Membership Program of the Grand Lodge of Georgia offers a way for you to endow your Lodge with the amount of your dues for as long as your Lodge exists. There are benefits to you now, you no longer have to pay dues, you are not subject to dues or per capita increases, you can transfer your perpetual membership to any lodge in Georgia, you can purchase a membership for every Lodge you belong to, you will be insuring the financial security of your Lodge forever. It benefits the young and the senior Mason alike.

The cost is twenty-one times your dues payable all at once or installments over five years, credit cards are accepted. There are applications available through your Grand Lodge office, on-line go to the home page (glofga.org) and scroll to the bottom for more information and an application. For an in-depth reading of how the program works you can go to the Masonic Code 7-2. The goal here is not to bore you with details, you can read that for yourself, but to encourage you to support your Lodge long after your death. Your perpetual membership is like having an extra dues paying member for many years to come. Plus you get a lapel pin and we all love our lapel pins.

Brethren please check out this program and make the decision to leave a Masonic Legacy that will benefit those that come after us.
Freemasonry came to England's American colonies early in the 1700s, when nearly every person in those colonies was a farmer or derived a living related to farming. During the time since then, sweeping change have happened to U.S. society and Freemasonry. For most Americans, daily life now requires a much more rapidly succession of appointments, and tasks. The craft's work has, during this same period, been embellished and many off-shoots with non-lodge activities have been created.

In the 1700s and 1800s men probably had a yen for ceremonies. Life was quiet and uneventful. Many fraternal organizations were created, during those years. Today life is almost overwhelming for men that make a daily, tiresome, and time-consuming commute to and from their jobs and see their families only in time for supper and on weekends. Many want only to relax and be mesmerized by TV programs, when they are at home, or to spend time with their families each evening. Despite this more would join us, if they found our purpose worthwhile.

As American culture evolved with increasing speed through the 1900's, Freemasonry attracted a smaller and smaller percentage of society's eligible men. Fewer members has meant fewer men to stimulate their lodges intellectually and to make lodge an interesting activity to attend. This in turn has resulted in fewer members that are leading citizens of their communities, states, and the U.S. If this cycle is not reversed it must end in the Order's reduction to insignificance, in a nation its members were instrumental in conceiving and birthing!

The relative absence now of one-time father-son memberships within Freemasonry is another discouraging sign of the times. Across the U.S., a declining membership pattern is well established for male-membership organizations. Nevertheless, we should ask ourselves if Freemasonry is just another fraternal group. If it has unique values to offer members, why has it the same problems as other fraternal organizations?

If our work was streamlined to its essential messages, it would be less tedious. Some men shrug their shoulders and say, "What can we do? Ritual is the glue that holds us together." However, too much glue results in lethargy. There is excellent meaning inherent in Masonic principles, and that meaning, if succinctly stated is vibrant.

One of the most relevant statements about repetitive events was made by Marcus Aurelius, who ruled the Roman empire from 161 to 180 AD. He is reckoned as the last truly capable and good Roman emperor. In his Meditations, he observed the effect repetition had upon him: "As it happens to thee in the amphitheater and such places, that the continual sight of the same things and the uniformity make the spectacle wearisome, so it is in the whole of life…" (https://lexundria.com/m_aur_med/6.46/lg):

Few men are interested in going to lodge to see lengthy rituals repeated, and morality plays have not drawn large crowds since the Middle Ages. Think about the number of men that are present for supper and then leave before lodge, on degree nights! Distilling degree work to its essence would make it more meaningful and its repetition less tiresome.

If the work was condensed to its essential messages, officers could learn it quickly. As it is now, work is often stumbled through for most of each new master's year. However, work that conveys Freemasonry's essential messages could enable officers to concentrate part of their time on planning and implementing social and charitable events. Those would, in turn, made lodge more attractive to attend.

It is also worth mentioning that stronger lodges would result from a reduction in the number of ancillary, masonic-related organizations. If a man belongs to several organizations, he normally neglects most in favor of one. No man can serve even two masters lest he serve one well and the other poorly.

My thoughts are not new. I first heard them from men that had been Masons for decades when I was raised in 1959. I have mentioned them to Grand Lodge and district officers through the decades since and have been told not to expect any changes. If we take no action, time will continue to marginalize our Order in U.S. society.
The Anglican Altar of Freemasonry
By Worshipful Brother Beau M. Davis, Sr. M.T.S., M.A.

This paper was originally presented to the Georgia Lodge of Research. The Georgia Lodge of Research meets every 5th Friday at the Atlanta Masonic Center. More information can be found at https://sites.google.com/view/glor/home.

For Part One of the following article, see the February 2020 issue of the Masonic Messenger.

As stated before, Catholic order and practice had necessitated ad orientem (that is, to the East) worship. Reformers of the Continent had disposed of the altar altogether and replaced it with a plain table for the Communion service, which often was brought into the sanctuary on the rare occasion of its celebration. One of the arguments against the use of a high altar and ad orientem worship was the perceived transformation of a simple meal which was instituted by Christ in the Gospels into a ritual re-sacrifice of Christ on the altar of a Catholic Mass. The 1549 Prayer Book did nothing to address the ad orientem practice: therefore it would be assumed that ad orientem celebration of the Communion would continue to be the norm. With the changes of the rubrics in the 1552, we see the birth of the Masonic altar in the rubric for Communion:

“The Table having at the Communion time a fare white linen cloth upon it, shall stand in the body of the Church, or in the chancel where Morning prayer and Evening prayer be appointed to be said. And the Priest standing at the north side of the Table, shall say the Lord’s prayer...”

Consequently, grand high altars were torn down from the eastern walls of churches throughout England to be replaced by simple wooden tables placed either in the very center of the church or in the chancel (the altar area separate from the nave and the rest of the congregation). The orientation of the priest standing in the north and facing south was to remove any mystery of the priestly ritual which emerged from the priest facing away from the congregation. This placement alone, being the law in the state church of the cradle of speculative Freemasonry and foreign to all other churches, is perhaps enough evidence to sway the hearts of architectural enthusiasts; but the manner in which we as masons interact with the altar sways the argument. The decoration, movement about, and who interacts with the altar all have their roots in the Anglican Church.

The decoration of the masonic altar will vary. What Book of the Law is placed thereon? What adornments are used? How are the lights arranged about it? While there is leeway for the manner in which these things can be done, there is prevalence of a certain style: especially within those Grand Lodge systems immediately founded by the English system (and especially those founded in the colonial era). In diverse and foreign lodges, any religious book which is sacred to the members of the lodge can be placed thereon (be it the Holy Bible, Quran, Upanishads, etc.). However, while the choice of Bibles is vast, it is difficult to find a lodge which prefers anything outside of the Authorized King James version of the Bible (however most likely without the Apocrypha). If there is any decorative cloth on the altar, it is most likely to follow the English simplistic tradition set down by Cranmer’s prescribed “fair linen cloth,” instead of the Catholic tradition of well-appointed (that is, embroidered or bejeweled) frontals and linens. Quite telling of the Anglican décor of the masonic tradition is the tapers which surround every altar. Prior to the Reformation, the Sarum Use of the English Church required two candles to be placed on the altar: representing the dual natures of Christ (both fully God and fully man). The use of altar candles was abandoned in the Church of England in the 16th and 17th centuries, and the attempted re-institution of them in the 19th century was one of the items proscribed by the Public Worship Act of 1874. That being the case, English Churches can be dark places, and as long as the candles were not on the altar they could be employed to illuminate the texts...
necessary for Church offices. To avoid the condemnable altar candle, burning tapers were placed about the altar at the corners; save occasionally the northeast corner where the priest or deacon would stand as guided by the 1552 rubric. Thus we have the birth of two peculiar practices related to the masonic altar. Firstly, there is the equilateral triangle placement of the tapers (our masonic verbiage only alluding to their arrangement in “triangular form about the Holy Altar”). Secondly, we have the deacon (who would stand in the Northern end of the altar to read the Gospel in the Anglican Communion service) on occasion standing as what we have deemed in the lodge the “fourth taper.”

Perhaps the most telling aspect of the Anglican Masonic altar is the way that masons treat the space between the altar and the seat of the worshipful master. A mason will go out of his way to walk from the northeast corner of the lodge room and around the western edge of the altar—all to avoid crossing the eastern side of the altar— to reach the southeast (making correspondence between the treasurer and secretary quite the workout). Whenever we are taught to perpetuate this practice, we are told that this space is sacred ground. We are told that the master should always have the altar in view. We are warned to never walk in this space which looks just like every other bit of floor in the whole lodge, but we are never told why. Why is it sacred? Why must we never go there? It is because it is the bishop’s place of honor. Only the bishop was allowed to sit on the eastern side of the altar, because the east and the rising sun represented God the Father and the coming of Christ; and the bishop, as a prince of the Church is God’s authority on earth, just as the consul who first sat in the honor seat of the Roman basilica was the Emperor’s authority in court. Only those who had a duty to perform with the bishop were permitted to cross to the east, and likewise only those who are performing duties for the master may approach the east in the lodge room. Even as the altar was moved away from the eastern wall of the Anglican churches, that space was treated as sacred, even though the bishop’s cathedra remained to the north of the altar. In the English Anglican Church, altars were returned to the eastern wall in the 19th century. English lodges followed suit: their altars have once again returned to the space immediately in front of the Worshipful Master, but American lodges founded under the old system retain the central position of the altar.

So we have developed rich symbolism for every little piece of furniture in our lodge room. The original meaning has been lost to many of us, but the origins are not that far removed from us. Numerous things have changed in the English Church which was the faith of the majority of our masonic forefathers, but Anglicanism remains the third largest body of Christianity, and a journey to a traditional Anglican parish can be an illuminating event for the experienced freemason. We have taken these things from the Church, which is not an odd foundation for a society fixated upon reality, and we have redefined some of the connotations, often for the better. We have assigned deep meaning to the three lights which were placed there by necessity. We have ennobled the position of the masonic deacon, who previously had stood there as not to have his back to the congregation. We have transformed empty space in a room to a holy place which otherwise would be profane: therefore bringing God to the forefront of the minds of the men who meet there on the level.

Sources Referenced

2nd Chronicles 7:7
1st Kings 7:48
1st Kings 8:9
Acts 2:46
When the highly-anticipated sequel to the 1986 smash hit "TOP GUN" premieres in June 2020, be sure to pay close attention to the costuming and set dressing - after all, much of it will be from Georgia.

Former Navy and Retired U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. William "Whitey" White and his wife Mechelle own the BLAIRSVILLE-based "AV8RSTUFF.com", a one-stop shop for authentic military patches, insignias, coins, ballcaps and other military memorabilia that will appear in the upcoming "TOP GUN: MAVERICK" iconic sequel due out next summer.

The retired bomber/fighter aviator is a huge fan of the original "TOP GUN" movie. In fact, the Navy-centric motion picture inspired Brother White - callsign "Whitey" - to become a Naval Flight Officer in the midst of the Gulf War, after which he flew combat missions in Bosnia, Iraq and Afghanistan, just like the heroes seen on the silver screen. Coincidentally, a couple of "Whitey's" flight school instructors at Naval Air Station Pensacola flew several of the aerial combat scenes in the original "TOP GUN," even taking actor Tom Cruise for a flight in a real-life F-14A Tomcat fighter jet like the one his character, Lt. Pete "Maverick" Mitchell, piloted in the movie. So when Paramount Studios acted on a recommendation from the US Navy's combat-aviator consultants and contacted "Whitey" for help outfitting the flight suits, jackets, gear, sets and backdrops of what turned out to be "TOP GUN: MAVERICK" with genuine patches and props to lend authenticity to the film, it was as if life had suddenly come full circle around that high-flying patriotic piece of American cinema.

"Roughly this time two years ago, Paramount Studios reached out to us to see if we could support their project," Whitey recalled. "They said, 'Whitey, several of our Navy consultants told us of AV8RSTUFF, and we'd like to use some of your authentic squadron memorabilia for a project we're working on.'" "Whitey" informed them that "we make - and have in stock - patches, coins, ballcaps, hats and all the authentic military squadron memorabilia you'd need." This was music to Paramount's ears, of course, and the studio jumped at the chance to work with "Whitey" and AV8RSTUFF. "We need enough items to outfit the characters and movie background sets for a military aviation movie we're making called (codename) 'Island Plaza,'" he remembered them saying. Intrigued, "Whitey" hit the internet to see what he could find. He couldn't help it; the memorabilia they required had made him quite curious. "When I Googled 'Island Plaza,' it came up as the codename for 'TOP GUN 2,'" Whitey said. "As we started working with the studio, they confided in us that, yes, this was the filming of 'TOP GUN: MAVERICK,'" and we were bound at that time not to say anything because it wasn't public that it was even coming out. "When the trailers started getting released, then we were allowed to talk about it a little, but were asked not to reveal any of the characters or storylines." Two movie trailers have since been released for "TOP GUN: MAVERICK," and together, they feature a number of scenes showing AV8RSTUFF.com's substantial contributions to the film.

Appearing in the trailers are AV8RSTUFF patches adorning the titular character's green Nomex flight jacket and the infamous leather jacket originally worn by Maverick's dad, as well as the memorabilia being worn by the other aviators and quite a bit of the historical items seen in the background of many of the scenes and AV8RSTUFF's contributions to the production went beyond the mere provision of memorabilia. "The crew from Paramount Studios really didn't know what they were asking for," Whitey said, "so..."
they asked AV8RSTUFF to consult for them unofficially to ensure authentic items would be sent to them to cover what they needed for accuracy. "Maverick is not an Air Force pilot, he's a Navy Captain in this movie, so we tailored all the backdrop stuff to be representative of what he would have gone through in his career. We provided a large majority of the background stuff used in the movie, as well as many of the items worn by the characters."

Added Whitey, "Initially, they were asking for a hodgepodge of items to include U.S. Air Force items and Navy SEAL patches. After we figured out what it was for, we gave them the option of using AV8RSTUFF as one of their consultants, advising that, 'If you are wanting authenticity, this is what you need to wear and display.' All told, AV8RSTUFF supplied approximately 5,000-plus pieces of memorabilia for the film, and though the company won't appear in the credits, it has received recognition from the studio as an official supplier for "TOP GUN: MAVERICK." Needed to say, "Whitey" is extremely excited to watch the sequel to the movie he's seen probably 150 times now, and not simply because his company had a hand in making it. When "TOP GUN" premiered in May of 1986, it was an instant naval and aviation cultural phenomenon. The high-octane action drama went on to gross $837 million, inspiring along the way a patriotic fervor among the citizenry that aided military recruitment efforts across the country. One of the areas that got some of the biggest response was Naval Aviation, thanks to Maverick, Goose, Iceman and Hollywood's "need for speed" as fighter pilots flying combat missions over the Pacific waters for the U.S. Navy. "Whitey" was one of those young men who saw the film and knew he wanted to fly in the Navy. He was in college when the movie hit theaters, and though he didn't join the Navy until 1991, seeing "TOP GUN" definitely altered his career path. At the time, Whitey was studying to become an aerospace engineer for a hopeful career as an astronaut. Because of "TOP GUN," he decided to serve his country by choosing Naval Aviation over other branches, such as Army Aviation - his two brothers are/were Army pilots.

Following college graduation, Whitey put his engineering degree to immediate use by working on the Navy's proposed A-12 Avenger II stealth bomber before the project was scrapped in '91. Not wanting to stay in a cubicle for decades as an engineer, he decided it was time to act on his dream of becoming an aviator by signing up for U.S. Naval Flight Officer training, where he graduated No. 1 in his class. Being the "HONORMAN" guaranteed 'Whitey' the opportunity to train in the jet of his choosing. So, he picked the venerable A-6E Intruder in hopes that the aging aircraft would be replaced with a follow-on attack plane like the Avenger, the aircraft he had spent several years wind-tunnel testing before it was cancelled. 'Whitey' continued his career as a navigator in the A-6E Intruder, a twin-jet carrier-based medium-attack two-seat bomber aircraft capable of deploying rockets, missiles and bombs. "Flying from an aircraft carrier during the daytime is like the E-Ticket ride at Disney - it's unbelievable," Whitey said. "You go from zero to 150 mph in 1.7 seconds, and you hope you're doing 150 mph when you get to the end of the ship, or else you're going to get wet! You launch, conduct your mission, recover and land. During daytime operations, in clear weather, no radio transmissions are made at the 'boat.' It's all done visually. "All the returning aircraft are holding overhead the carrier at different altitudes, and as soon as they launch the next wave of 'birds' for the next cycle and get all the aircraft ground equipment gear out of the way, anywhere from 20 to 25 airplanes just start winding down like a corkscrew. You come in for the 'break,' drop the gear and land. Not a word is spoken on the radio."

Once all the aviators are proficient at carrier operations, landings usually occur one after another about every 45 to 50 seconds under extremely high-stress conditions that are hard for most people to fathom, 'Whitey' said. Not only is the ship bobbing up and down in the waves, but the runway is canted 11 degrees to port and the carrier is moving 20-25 mph through the water, meaning "you have to anticipate where it's going to be so you can land there. It's some of the most fun stuff you could ever do," he said. "I was fortunate to have 239 landings on different boats, 195 of which were on the USS Enterprise, the carrier used in the original TOP GUN movie. "Seventy-five of those landings were at night. Nighttime operations around the boat are extremely challenging and usually scare the living daylights out of you."

After the Intruders were retired in 1997, Whitey was chosen to participate in the Air Force "exchange program," where he flew combat missions in the F-15E Strike Eagle in northern Iraq. The F-15E could perform long-range strikes, ground attacks and air-to-air combat. Chosen for this program for his air-to-ground background, he excelled in that arena, but the
most challenging aspects were the "air-to-air" roles, which he described as incredibly exciting, especially basic fighter maneuvers commonly known as "dogfighting." In 2000, after his exchange tour was complete, Whitey transferred to the Georgia Air National Guard at Robins Air Force Base and began flying the B-1B Lancer, the USAF's premiere long-range bomber, able to carry 84 x 500-pounds bombs internally. When the B-1s were replaced with the E-8C Joint STARS surveillance aircraft, Whitey transitioned to the "Battle Management" role, commanding forces in theater during flight operations. He remained with the Air National Guard until retiring in 2012, deploying for eight Middle East tours and accumulating over 5,000 flight hours.

Whitey flew in over two dozen aircraft in military training and operations, and he was able to fly for all 20-plus years of his career, becoming the only person in history to have been combat-rated in all three of those attack/fighter planes: the A-6E, F-15E and B-1B bomber, the latter two being supersonic. To this day, Whitey is thankful for having received the opportunity to serve his country in a role of which many could only dream. "You don't do this job for glory or the pay - you're not getting rich doing it," Whitey said. "You do it out of the love of your country, the love of your family and community, and for the guy that's right next to you. You'd die for that guy. I would take a bullet to save that guy; I would have done whatever it took to save the guy I was flying with. It's a bond known only by a few, such as firefighters, police officers and other first responders who have that same kinship with each other." 

Alongside AV8RSTUFF.com - founded in 1998 and owned by Whitey's wife Mechelle - the retired military flyer works for a company called Sigma Defense out of Warner Robins that contracts with the U.S. Department of Defense. The Whites have been married for 22 years and have two children, Brittany and Hunter. Brittany graduated medical school in May, and Hunter, 16, earned his Eagle Scout rank in November, both accomplishments bringing a huge smile to Whitey's face when mentioned.

As to how the Whites came to reside in the North Georgia Mountains, before Whitey retired from the military, the family would travel in their RV to vacation in the area. They loved the area so much that they bought a home in Blairsville in 2008, moving here full time in 2011 and opening a warehouse to operate their business out of Union County Having been successful in his military endeavors, he now focuses on his religion, his family, his civic organizations/community, his friends, but most especially serving the Grand Master as his Grand Tyler this year....Whitey' is very involved locally, serving as an assistant Scoutmaster for his local BSA Troop; as past Worshipful Master of Allegheny Masonic Lodge No. 114 and current Grand Tyler of Georgia for Grand Master Johnie M. Garmon; and as an active member of various veterans' service organizations. "While I wish I was still going Mach 1 with my hair on fire, Father Time and too many G-forces have taken their toll on this old body, so I had to retire and fly a desk now," Whitey said. But to this day, anytime someone mentions military aviation to him, they first catch that twinkle in his eye and see that fire in his heart come roaring back as if he'd never left the cockpit. That's why, coupled with his unique military career and the influence of the original "TOP GUN" movie on his path, working on the sequel has meant so much to him, and it was a particularly special moment when he received a commemorative "TOP GUN: MAVERICK" coin as a thank you from Paramount Studios and Tom Cruise for his contributions to the movie. AV8RSTUFF's work on "TOP GUN: MAVERICK" has opened the doors for more set-consulting opportunities, including for the new "Magnum P.I." TV show and other projects through NBC, Netflix, Gerber Knives and others. "Everyone talks about how Hollywood is so anti-military and anti-conservative, but the ones that I've interacted with love the military," Whitey said. "They are as patriotic as those you would find in the historically conservative regions anywhere."

Looking back over his extensive military career and the totality of his life experiences, Whitey has some advice for all who would hear, no matter where they hail from around the country. "Get involved in something, whatever that might be, and give it your utmost," Whitey said. "Do your best, be the standard, and always be willing to lend a hand. It will make our country great again!"
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Pythagoras Lodge No. 41, F.&A.M. in Decatur, GA has a number of claims to excellence. Not only is it possessed of one of the most breathtaking Lodgerooms on which we’ve had the pleasure to lay our eyes, but as all of Her Brethren well know, Pythagoras Lodge No. 41 was also the home to many of the famous Candler family, the family responsible for founding the Coca-Cola Company. However, without the work of another important Georgian and Freemason, the world may never have known the name of the remarkable Candler family, or their product, Coca-Cola.

John Stith Pemberton (1831–1888) of Columbia Lodge No. 7, F.&A.M. in Columbus, GA was the inventor of the world-famous beverage we now know as Coca-Cola. Born to parents James Pemberton and Martha L. Gant in Knoxville, GA on July 8, 1831, Pemberton spent his childhood in Rome, GA. As a young man Pemberton relocated to Macon, GA where he studied pharmacy at Reform Medical College, and in 1850 he graduated as a licensed pharmacist.

Three years later Pemberton met and married his wife Ann Eliza “Cliff” Clifford of Columbus, GA, and the year following the young couple had a son, Charles “Charlie” Ney Pemberton. The three lived happily in the famous Pemberton House of Columbus, GA.

Eager to serve his country, Pemberton enlisted in the American Civil War and served in the Third Calvary Battalion of the GA State Guard, a component of the Confederate Army, where he attained to the rank of lieutenant colonel. After sustaining a chest wound during the Battle of Columbus, like many other wounded veterans at the time, Pemberton became severely addicted to morphine, which he employed to ease the pain of his substantial injury.

In an attempt both to treat his morphine addiction and to find a non-opioid pain reliever that was sufficiently powerful to abate his agony, in 1866, relying on his knowledge as a pharmacist, Pemberton began to experiment with creating a new analgesic tonic. His first attempt resulted in an elixir he labeled Dr. Tuggle’s Compound Syrup of Golden Flower, a tincture which was prepared from buttonbush (Cephalanthus occidentalis), a toxic plant that flourished in his native state. Unable to find adequate relief in the compound, Pemberton began his experimentation anew.

Taking a page from Angelo Mariani, a Parisian chemist who made a fortune in 1863 after combining cocaine with wine in an elixir he called Vin Mariani, a concoction that was praised by the likes of Jules Verne, Alexander Dumas, Freemason Arthur Conan Doyle, Pope Leo XIII, and even the chief rabbi of France, the latter of whom is quoted as exclaiming “Praise be to Mariani’s wine!”, Pemberton attempted to create his own American spin on the product. The result was Pemberton’s French Wine Cola, a powerful tonic which combined Mar-
ani’s cocaine and wine blend with known aphrodisiac damiana (Turnera diffusa) and the caffeine-rich kola nut of Africa. While it did not provide him with much relief in regard to his painful injury or his morphine addiction, as “the ideal brain tonic” the elixir was marketed primarily to upper class intellectuals as a panacea, cited as being a cure for nervous disorders, dyspepsia, gastroparesis, mental and physical exhaustion, gastric irritability, constipation, headache, impotence, and a whole host of other maladies and disorders. In an 1885 interview with the Atlanta Journal, Pemberton touted that the tonic would be valuable to “scientists, scholars, poets, divines, lawyers, physicians, and others devoted to extreme mental exertion.”

The following year, in 1886, Atlanta and Fulton County enacted temperance legislation which would prevent Pemberton from producing and selling his French Wine Cola in its then present form. This led Pemberton back to the drawing board in search of a new formula. In this endeavor he enlisted the assistance of drugstore owner and proprietor Willis E. Venable. During this set of experiments, in an attempt to recreate the tonic sans alcohol (the use of cocaine was not prohibited by the legislation), a fortuitous accident led the pair to combine the base syrup of the tonic with carbonated water. Pemberton was so impressed with the result that he decided to market the product instead as a fountain soda.

Pemberton’s friend Frank Mason Robinson, who handwrote the Spencerian script on the Coca-Cola bottles and advertisements, came up with the final name Coca-Cola as a description of its two main active ingredients, cocaine and kola nut.

The year after Coca-Cola hit the market Pemberton fell terribly ill with stomach cancer, nearly going bankrupt as his expensive morphine habit rapidly escalated following this malign misfortune. Reluctantly, he and his son decided to sell the rights and patents of the beverage to his business partners in Atlanta, GA, the family of Mayor Asa Griggs Candler, for $1,750. Nearly penniless and hopelessly addicted to morphine, Pemberton sadly succumbed to his cancer. He passed away on August 16, 1888.

Fifteen years following Pemberton’s demise, in 1903, due to the social climate of the era and the pressure felt from the public, Asa Griggs Candler made the decision to alter Pemberton’s recipe and remove cocaine from the product’s ingredients. However, Coca-Cola did not wane in popularity. The current recipe remains “the most guarded trade secret in the world,” and Coca-Cola stands as celebrated and iconic today as it did when it hit the market nearly a century and a half ago.
I wonder if Wild Bill could have imagined that the hand, he was holding at his death would forever be synonymous with death? As I get older the notion of death becomes more relevant every day. I fashion myself as an observer of life and all the aspects of it, the struggles, excitement, pain and release from it. The older we grow the closer our walk gets with death and the more we see him. As a young man I don’t recall the daily rubbing of shoulders with the grim reaper, when I brushed by him I felt the excitement of it and the pride of having cheated him out of being able to complete his task, much like stealing a base in baseball and the catcher making a bad throw and you advanced another base on his mistake. Do we embrace death or do we become more comfortable with his presence? My belief is, when someone passes from this place the struggle is different for each. Some will pass with ease and comfort, while others fight death until the bitter end.

Over the last year my wife and I have had to deal with the “now what” scenario in depth. Both of her parents passed away and she has been left to sort out those affairs. What is life? Is it a collection of things, trinkets and leftover clothing? I surmise its more than that. As she and I prepared their home to be sold, we were at so many crossroads and mountains for which there are no directions or maps that have the course clearly drawn out. What do we do with this, what do we do with that? The questions continued through every occasion.

I have reflected everyday on the choices I am making, am I leaving things behind that my children will sit and question the same thing. Will my intentions be clear for them? Will I have invested enough of me in them, so that they realize who I truly am, at my core, the man I hope they remember. We fill our lives with so many items, things, pieces of this and that, collectibles and treasures. At the end, it is all reduced into categories of trash, good, and keep.

This year our Lodge lost more brothers than I care to dwell on, that in turn increased our Widow’s list. Visiting the Sweethearts takes on a different feel when the wound is still open. Some were fresh off the funerals, some had begun the process of moving on without “their Mason,” others were stalled and stuck in the mire of what’s next. The idea of leaving here turns into a series of conflicting issues for us: the things you wish you would have done, the things you leave unfinished, and the things you take to the grave with you. The essence of us will only live for a generation or so, we might leave behind a great fortune or we might leave behind a great debt, in either case that will disappear within a few years and all that is left is who you were.

The great poem, “The Dash- how we spend our days, to consider what’s true and what’s real.” This poem leaves me with hope and assurance. I have lots of clutter and noise; many things that will be sorted and categorized and my intention is to reduce that to a manageable amount. I don’t want my children to sort through my life at the end and reflect upon the mountain of debris I have left. I want to finish the undone task, “dot the I’s and cross the T’s.” My desire for them is to drive away encouraged that I walked upright before the Grand Architect and left behind a well-marked trail. I want them to read through my notes and find comfort, not despair of the mess they must clean up.

Leaving this world is a part of entering this world, they walk hand in hand. How we leave is not always left up to us, most of you Brothers will not choose your crossing from one life to the next. However, we do get to choose how we live! That’s the greatest part of this journey, that part is our choice 100%. You and I get to make the impression we want. We carve out and leave behind exactly what we choose. When the lid is closed and the dirt fills the hole, I want them to say, “remember when Daddy did so-and-so?” and “the time he helped me do this and that?” Not, “what in the world are we going to do with all this junk?” Our life is the real treasure for us to find, the purpose of why we were born and placed here. Live that life well Brethren. Represent that “LIGHT” you have been given! Invest in that thing that will bring great return! I have no desire to stand solemnly at another coffin, however, I know I will. I will see others pass and new ones join the ranks. My desire would be in some way to be influential in marking the trail. To leave a path for others to follow. Mark your path, blaze a way for others to follow, lead them straight and true.
The Masonic Home Endowment Fund Committee is pleased to announce an annual Lodge recognition program for their support of the Endowment Fund. The Endowment Fund is critical to the continued operation of the Masonic Children’s Home. Thanks to our brothers who had the foresight start the Endowment Fund, our Children’s Home are ensured of a long future. So long as we have an Endowment Fund, we will have a Children’s Home. It is refreshing to know that every dollar you have ever donated to the Endowment Fund, be it thirty years, thirty months, thirty weeks or thirty days ago, is still in the core principle of the fund. Each of these dollars provide annual earnings that are either retained in the fund or goes toward the operations of the Home. Masonic Code specifies that the core fund can never be distributed, but the earnings from your donations supply more than half of the operating cost of the Home in the last few years. Without this source of income, the per capita in support of the Home would need to have been doubled.

Our Masonic Home Endowment Fund Committee have announced a Lodge recognition program to provide an incentive to Lodges to increase their annual donations to the fund, by creating what we term an Acorn Level Supporter of the Endowment Fund. To reach and maintain Acorn Level Status, a Lodge must donate a minimum of $500 in any year and increase by a minimum of 10% over their prior year’s donation level. A special consideration is made for Lodges whose prior year’s donation level is at $6,000 or more, the 10% increase is waived so long as the Lodge meets the $500 minimum. Second year and beyond Acorn Level Lodges will receive the annualized bar to be added below their previous annualized bar.

Acorn Level Lodges receive a wall plaque with an annualized bar that shows the year, the Lodge Name and the name of the Worshipful Master for that year. The Georgia Masonic Home annual report that is distributed to attendees of Grand Lodge is the official record used to identify qualifying Lodges. If you are unsure of your prior year’s donation level, you can find this information in this report, or by contacting your District Endowment Fund Committee member or calling the Grand Lodge office. It is important to note that the report includes Lodge donations between September 1 and August 31. It is also important that the donating Lodge name and number be identified on the check, to ensure proper credit for your Lodge. When making donations to multiple charities, please write a separate check for each account.

A video describing this recognition program by Grand Master Johnie M. Garmon can be viewed on the Grand Lodge’s website.
Lodge Website www.glofga.org under the Philanthropy tab.

Acorn Level Lodges will be recognized at either the Grand Master’s Forum in January-February or at their District Convention. The District Endowment Fund Committee member works with their District Master and the Grand Master to determine when and where your Lodge will receive their recognition.

The District Endowment Fund Committee members are:

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Lodges that were recognized in 2019 as Acorn Level Supporters of the Endowment Fund include:

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- Atlanta Peachtree #059
- Sandy Springs #124
- Fulton #216
- Thomasville #369
- Rose Hill #484
- Columbian #007
- Palmetto #074
- Ancient York #127
- Nelms #323
- Sylvan #429
- Pace #558
- Zerubbabel #015
- Oak Bowery #081
- Mount Airy #141
- Vidalia #330
- Stone Mountain #449
- Thunderbolt #693
- Morrow #734
- San Marino #034
- Tryian #111
- Floyd Springs #167
- Dexter #340
- Duluth #480
- Resaca #724

**Will your Lodge be recognized as an Acorn Level Supporter of our Children’s Home in 2020? We certainly hope so!**
In Times of Uncertainty –

Masonic Charity Is Certain!
GACHIP Donates Swabs for Coronavirus Testing!

With the worldwide Coronavirus Pandemic, we have all heard and know firsthand how important it is to test, test, and test. The whole world is embroiled in the most unprecedented times of testing and medical care challenges. To say the least, our entire lives have changed and most likely have changed forever. Not in 100 years has such a Pandemic existed that encompasses our entire world. Indeed, it reminds us all how small and interconnected we are as a human race.

In a small measure, your GACHIP Program has contributed to the endless list of charitable acts. As we know, the charity of Masons begins with a Brother. Through the GACHIP program and with the assistance of several Brothers we have donated over 3,000 GACHIP ID Kit SWABS to Children’s Healthcare Scottish Rite Hospital for Coronavirus testing! Hospital testing swab supplies are at a severe shortage and our GACHIP Swabs are now being used for Coronavirus testing. Who would ever have thought that part of our GACHIP ID Kits would become so imperative to our state in a time of world-wide crisis!

This contribution was made possible by the efforts of Brother David Liss and Brother Roger Leggett (see their pictures) working with the Community Officer of the Hospital. A special thanks to my wife Carol for traveling with me the 400 miles to and from Augusta to pick up a supply of swabs. In addition thanks to several of our GACHIP District Directors for making this happen. The Hospital’s Community Development Officer was so overwhelmed that we were donating swabs that she stated: “I cannot tell you how much it means to have the swabs donated by Georgia Free and Accepted Masons! Our Children’s Healthcare lab is absolutely thrilled!” See the pictures of our donation of Swabs and the Brothers who worked with the Hospital, traveling to our supply center, and delivering the swabs to the hospital.

This is just one example of millions of our Brothers throughout the world making a difference in fighting the global pandemic. We live it firsthand every day and will continue to do so. As we learned in the EA Charity Lecture, “Charity extends beyond the grave throughout the boundless realms of eternity.” Each day our acts of charity will lessen the anxiety and fears that we are enduring through this pandemic.

Every good thing you do creates ripples that you may not see. Do them anyway!
“Veterans Corner” by Worshipful Brother Rick Conn, MSA

If you are a Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veteran, and have a claim in, those claims are now being determined. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) began deciding claims for the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019 at 12:01 a.m., Philippine Standard Time, Jan. 1, 2020, as the Philippines is the farthest east VA regional benefits office. The Act extends the presumption of herbicide exposure, that include toxins such as Agent Orange, to Veterans who served in the offshore waters of the Republic of Vietnam during the Vietnam War. Signed into law Jun. 25, the law specifically affects Blue Water Navy (BWN) Veterans who served no more than 12 nautical miles offshore of the Republic of Vietnam between Jan. 6, 1962 and May 7, 1975, as well as Veterans who served in the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) between Jan. 1, 1967 and Aug. 31, 1971. These Veterans can now apply for disability compensation and other benefits if they have since developed one of 14 conditions that are presumed to be related to exposure to herbicides. Veterans do not need to prove that they were exposed to herbicides. The specific conditions can be found by searching the term “Agent Orange” on www.va.gov.

“For six months, VA worked diligently to gather and digitize records from the National Archives and Records Administration to support faster claims decisions,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “These efforts will positively impact the claims process for Veterans filing for these benefits.”

To be eligible a Veteran must have served in the identified locations during the specified time period and currently have a condition(s) associated with herbicide exposures, such as Agent Orange. Blue Water Navy claims are being processed under current prioritization criteria; however, special priority is being given to Veterans who are over the age of 85 or have a terminal condition. Qualifying recipients include affected Veterans who are still living and certain survivors of deceased BWN and Korean DMZ Veterans. Survivors can file claims for benefits based on the Veteran’s service if the Veteran died from at least one of the 14 presumptive conditions associated with herbicides such as Agent Orange. The law also provides benefits for children born with spina bifida if their parent is or was a Veteran with certain verified service in Thailand during a specific period. The Act includes provisions impacting the VA Home Loan Program. Veterans have more access to obtain no-down payment home loans, regardless of loan amount, and the home loan funding fee is reduced for eligible Reservists and National Guard borrowers who use their home loan benefits for the first time. VA’s website describes the eligibility of certain Purple Heart recipients who do not have to pay a funding fee as well as other benefits. Veterans who want to file an initial claim for an herbicide-related disability can use VA Form 21-526EZ, Application for Disability Compensation and Related Compensation Benefits or work with a VA-recognized Veterans Service Organization to assist with the application process. Veterans may also contact their state Veterans Affairs Office.

BWN Veterans who previously filed a claim seeking service connection for one of the 14 presumptive conditions that was denied by VA may provide or identify any new and relevant information regarding their claim when reapplying. To re-apply, Veterans may use VA Form 20-0995, Decision Review Request: Supplemental Claim. As a result of the new law, VA will automatically review claims that are currently in the VA review process or under appeal. Visit Blue Water Navy Veterans benefits for more information or call 1-800-749-8387 for special issues.

For more information in this issue and other articles mentioned in the Veteran’s Corner section of this publication, see pg. 25 of this issue. The information has been provided by Ed Ball, RMC(SW), USN, Ret., Shelby Co., OH CVSO Ret. Military Veterans Advocacy Inc., Director of Research Blue Water Navy Assoc., Board Member
What to do if you see a news article in your local area that provides the erroneous information about 12nm from shoreline/coast of South Vietnam? Recommend you share this with them, preferably by email so they have access to hyperlinks.

Military Veterans Advocacy and Blue Water Navy Assoc have worked tirelessly for months to get VA to promulgate the correct information as noted in their Agent Orange exposure on Navy or Coast Guard ships which is:

Quote:
And at least one of these must also be true. Your military record must show that between
January 9, 1962, and May 7, 1975, you:
• Were aboard a U.S. military vessel that operated in the inland waterways of Vietnam, or
• Served on a vessel not more than 12 nautical miles seaward of the demarcation line of the waters of Vietnam and Cambodia (as detailed in Public Law 116-23, the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019)

The demarcation line, is simply the Straight Baseline offshore of Vietnam as noted by the latitudes and longitudes promulgated by members of Congress in HR 299 / PL 116-23.

The Federal Circuit Court in Procopio v Wilkie defined the sovereign territory of Vietnam IAW the U.N. Convention and Law of the Sea 1982 Part 11, articles 2, 3, and 7 which addresses

Article 2
Legal status of the territorial sea, of the air space over the territorial sea and of its bed and subsoil — to include: This sovereignty extends to the air space over the territorial sea as well as to its bed and subsoil.

Article 3
Breadth of the territorial sea — breadth of its territorial sea up to a limit not exceeding 12 nautical miles, measured from baselines

Article 7
Straight baselines — or if there is a fringe of islands along the coast in its immediate vicinity, the method of straight baselines joining appropriate points may be employed in drawing the baseline from which the breadth of the territorial sea is measured.

In Procopio v Wilkin, the Federal Circuit Court further stated the sovereignty of Vietnam extended beyond the Territorial Sea which would include what is known as the Contiguous Zone. Sadly, Congress excluded the Contiguous Zone.

You will note the VA’s Blue Water Navy Tool has severe limitations, in that they are focused upon the ship’s 0800, 1200, and 2000 positions. As such, does not take into consideration the following:

1. The ship’s in company; nor
2. Dead Reckoning Plotting — taking a known good position and plotting changes in course and speed between those known positions, as we have done with the USS Bainbridge DLGN-25, USS Constellation CVA-64 and others, making them eligible under PL 116-23.

Our ongoing deck log project uses the UNCLOS 1982 as reflected in both the Federal Circuit Court Decision Procopio v Wilkie of 22 Jan 2012 and PL 116-23.

Even though PL 116-23 notes Cambodia in addition to the Republic of Vietnam, you will not find the coordinates for their baseline promulgated, neither has the VA published the same, they can be found here, as abided by the DOD in maritime operations, and further referenced by Navy JAG.
Let’s begin with some questions: Have you ever given thought as to how our Georgia Child Identification Program is used as a critical tool for our police departments when a child abduction occurs? How does the National Amber Alert system work? First let’s review some history about GACHIP. Beginning in 2004, Freemasons from various state jurisdictions in the United States and in several Canadian provinces began the work necessary to set up their state-wide program to host events. Most important was to provide the Child ID Kit information to the parent or guardian which could then aid the law enforcement agencies in initiating the Amber Alert process. The value of our ID Kit is that if a child is missing and that child has been identified at a GACHIP event, the tools in the GACHIP kit will provide law-enforcement with digital pictures and information that is compatible with the Amber Alert program. The parent should tell the law-enforcement agent when they noticed the child missing and what the child was wearing at the time. And request that the child’s name and identifying information be immediately entered into the National Crime Information Center Missing Person file. Timing is crucial for this information to become public.

Let’s explore the history and success rate of the Amber Alert System. We know for example that our GACHIP Kit is a crucial and comprehensive collection of information to share with the appropriate authorities when a person is gone missing. Below are question and research gathering.

You may ask - Where and why did AMBER Alert first start?

The AMBER Alert System began in 1996 when Dallas-Fort Worth broadcasters teamed with local police to develop an early warning system to help find abducted children. AMBER stands for America's Missing: Broadcast Emergency Response and was created as a legacy to 9-year-old Amber Hagerman, who was kidnapped while riding her bicycle in Arlington, Texas, and then brutally murdered. Other states and communities soon set up their own AMBER plans as the idea was adopted across the nation.

You may ask - How does Amber Alert actually work?

Once law enforcement has determined that a child has been abducted and the abduction meets AMBER Alert criteria, law enforcement notifies broadcasters and state transportation officials. AMBER Alerts interrupt regular programming and are broadcast on radio and television and DOT highway signs. AMBER Alerts can also be re-disseminated through lottery, digital billboards, Internet Ad exchanges, Internet Service Providers, Internet search engines, as well as wireless devices such as mobile phones.

You may ask - How effective has it been?

As of September 2019, there have been nearly 1,000 children successfully recovered through the AMBER Alert system. Just think how important our GACHIP Kit is when searching for a child. It has also been stated that AMBER Alerts also serve as deterrents to those who would prey upon our children. AMBER Alert cases have shown that some perpetrators release the abducted child after hearing the AMBER Alert. Of course, we will never know if our GACHIP kits have been used to assist a family in such a terrible and life-threatening circumstance. However, we DO know that the information included in the GACHIP Kit is a valuable resource for law enforcement to use if this situation does arise.

To wrap up, what we accomplish through GACHIP is so critical. I hope that you have found this article informative and helpful to enlighten all of us of the importance of the GACHIP program. As Masons, we have the opportunity of a lifetime to sustain our statewide program in doing something enduring and everlasting for those who cannot do so for themselves. What we do is far reaching and indeed a charity from our Masonic hearts to the communities we engage.
In Memoriam

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30 / April 2020
# In Memoriam

**Members Reported Deceased January 26**  
—March 28, 2020

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The "Grand Lodge of Georgia" Store is now online at
https://av8rstuff.com/GLofGAindex.html

While many items are from the “Kids Store” (we’re working in partnership with them), we are also going to be offering many new and unique items for our many Masons in Georgia to show their pride, leading their friends and neighbors to inquire as to what a Freemason is and what we’re all about. We are excited about the new outlet we Georgia Masons have to obtain the items we want.

You can also find the link on the Grand Lodge of Georgia website or can contact “Whitey” White (478-997-1011) or Ivy Smith (478-731-6050)