

MIAP presents flag to Union County Sheriff's Office



Photo by Shawn Jarrard

Everyone in this photo at the Union County Sheriff's Office is a veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces, except for UCSO Capt. Susan Rhodes, left, who is a big supporter of veterans.

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
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Volunteers with the Missing in America Project presented the funeral flag of U.S. Army Specialist 4 Max Newton Hupp to the Union County Sheriff's Office on Thursday, May 10.

Hupp was a Vietnam Veteran out of Toccoa who died without any friends or next of kin to take care of his remains.

In death, however, he found friends in the Missing in America Project, the Union County Sheriff's Office, Mountain View Funeral Home, area veterans and others.

The national mission of MIAP volunteers, undertaken in earnest, is to locate, identify and inurn the unclaimed remains of American veterans like Hupp through the joint efforts of private, state and federal organizations.

To date, MIAP Georgia has organized two local funeral processions for seven previously forgotten veterans, all of whom have received their promised Military Funeral Honors and inurnment inside the Georgia National Cemetery in Canton.

These local processions have been led by UCSO Lt. Craig Davenport – one to Fannin County and the other to completion across the North Georgia Mountains – with the help of multiple veterans' groups and patriotic residents.

"Escorting the procession down and looking in the rearview mirror, seeing about a mile of mourners and vehicles, it's an inspiring thing," said Lt. Davenport.

It's customary in a military funeral that a veteran's flag be presented to their family. Since Hupp had none to speak of, MIAP presented his flag to the sheriff's office, the members of which came through for him in death.

"You guys are defending us every day out there on

the streets of this county, and I think it's a perfect match and I thank you," said Harvey Schwartz, a volunteer with MIAP Georgia and senior vice commander of American Legion Post 121.

Henceforth, the flag of U.S. Army Specialist 4 Max Newton Hupp will be displayed prominently inside the Union County Sheriff's Office.

"We're thankful for this organization that goes around and finds the remains of these people that didn't have any family, and gives them a proper interment," said Union County Sheriff Mack Mason. "We're grateful for the work that they do. We support them 100 percent."

"We will proudly display this here in the lobby. We're thankful for all veterans, present, past and future."

MIAP Georgia will be presenting the funeral flag of John Paul Warren of Statesboro – a veteran who also served as a U.S. Army Specialist 4 in Vietnam – to the Blairsville Chapter 1101 Vietnam Veterans of America on May 17.

Warren's remains traveled in the same procession as Hupp on April 25 to his final resting place at the Georgia National Cemetery.

"These veterans served in

peace time, they served during the war, to defend our nation," said MIAP Georgia Director Daniel Poirier. "There's no reason why they should be sitting on a shelf somewhere."

"They were never promised that they'd be sitting on a shelf forever. They were promised a funeral with dignity and honor at the end in a national cemetery."

Added Poirier: "They have no family. A lot of them have outlived their families. We're their families now. We accept the remains from the funeral homes, and we sign as their family. There's nobody else to do this."

MIAP Georgia is inviting the public to attend Army Military Honors for U.S. Army Sgt. Major Francis Marion Thomason, a veteran of World War I.

The event will take place at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, May 22, inside the Ball Ground Community Cemetery located at 4120 Ball Ground Road in Ball Ground, Georgia.

Prior to an intervention by the Missing in America Project and others, Thomason's grave was marked only by a simple stone – now, his grave has an official government headstone displaying his service to his country.



Photo by Shawn Jarrard

Union County Sheriff Mack Mason thanking MIAP Georgia Director Daniel Poirier, center, and fellow volunteer Harvey Schwartz for delivering the flag on May 10.

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Automated external defibrillators are a crucial lifesaving tool for any medical professional, and thanks to donations, there are now eight more in the hands of Union County firefighters.

firefighter) members I know has saved about two or three lives with his.

"So, these will just give more members the opportunity to save more lives in the county."

The volunteers of Station No. 2 cover the areas of stations 2, 6 and 9, which is Jones Creek, Mulkey Gap and Pat Colwell, though they will also respond to any structure fire in the county when needed.

"They had a couple of the AEDs, but they bought more and updated the ones that they had," said Union County Fire Chief David Dyer. "They're putting them on their trucks and they're handing them out to medically trained firefighters."

Of course, the AEDs are always good to have on hand during a medical emergency call, and for the firefighters, potentially every emergency they respond to is a medical emergency.

"You may have a victim of cardiac arrest at a fire, or you may have a firefighter who falls

out with cardiac arrest," said Dyer. "So, that's helping on our side and the public side."

Continued Chief Dyer: "Besides CPR, these machines are probably the No. 1 lifesaver of people in cardiac arrest. These guys can be in their pickup or in the car, and they can be anywhere."

"So, if there's a call for a cardiac arrest out there, those guys could respond from anywhere in the county if they're in that area to bring this AED."

The chief said he'd love for every medically trained firefighter in the county to have one of these portable lifesaving machines, but they're pretty expensive.

"It's not been something that we have been able to afford," said Chief Dyer. "Over the last couple of years, we've been dependent on volunteer donations to purchase these things, and we've purchased a few on our own through the budget."

Added Dyer: "It's very

forward-thinking of this station to go ahead and purchase these AEDs. I'm glad they're in a financial position that they're able to do that, and those volunteer donations make that possible. It's going to be a big help to people in the community."

As the chief said, donations are a vital part of ensuring volunteer fire departments have what they need to serve their communities.

In recent years, donations have helped the fire department put several big pieces of fire apparatus in service, including a rescue truck, two fire engines and other equipment.

Both Chief Dyer and Lt. Burnette are thankful to those who donate to make the county safer for everyone.

"It's with their support that we are able to buy new equipment or get updated equipment for our stations and fire personnel," said Lt. Burnette. "If it wasn't for that, we wouldn't have the equipment that we've got."