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family," Honaker said. "I have escorted fallen warriors to their final resting place, and could do little to assuage the questions of the Next of Kin, or the pain, distress and anguish they were going through.

"The images of war are as vivid in my mind today as when I lived them," he said. "I can still remember the name of the first soldier who came through our Ninth Infantry Division collecting point in the Mekong Delta.

"In fact there are many more names - of friends, of those who would bring remains to our Collecting Point and weeks later someone would bring in their body," Honaker said. "Policy dictated that when the Unit Commander could not recover his dead it became the job of Graves Registration to go to the battlefield, or crash site and recover them.

"Plane and helicopter crashes, vehicle explosions, booby-trapped remains, mutilations by the enemy, all kinds of injuries from single bullet

wounds to massive traumatic destruction of what was once a living human being," Honaker said. "I have seen first hand the horrors of war. It doesn't just affect the combatants. What do they call them? Collateral damage, innocent civilians, caught up in conflict become casualties also. I've watched village members who received the bodies of loved ones cry out in anguish and frustration, not understanding how this could have happened.

"Veterans Day is a time to honor those who have served in the Armed Forces throughout the course of our country's history," Honaker said. "It is both humbling and gratifying to realize that we are a part of the tapestry of our nation's freedoms, veterans who have followed and preserved what others have served and fought to defend. As honorable as it is to pay homage to veterans today, it is hard to do just that when we realize that for every one of us who is alive today, there are thousands who did

not make it home. "All gave some, some gave all; All were veterans," he said.

At the Union County Community Center on Monday, and Union County High School on Friday, the community honored all of those, from each branch of the military who had served our nation.

Perhaps the most moving part of the ceremony was the Missing Man Table. The raised table was empty and reserved to honor our men and women who are still missing.

On the table, a hat was placed by the North Georgia Honor Guard for each of the six armed services and a seventh for missing civilians. The white tablecloth symbolizes purity, the single red rose is to remind us of the loved ones awaiting answers, and the vase is tied with a red ribbon, symbolizing the continued effort to account for the missing.

A slice of lemon on the bread plate reminds us of the bitter fate of those captured

on foreign soil; a pinch of salt symbolizes the tears endured by those missing and their family seeking answers. A Bible represents the strength, gained through faith, and the glass is inverted to symbolize their inability to share in the toast. At the conclusion, all those in attendance raised their water glasses in a toast to honor America's Prisoners Of War and those Missing In Action.

VFW Commander Richard Hoibraten and DAV Commander Charlie Hunter presented the Commander's Award to Bill Hughes. The Commander's Award is given annually to a worthy veteran who has demonstrated outstanding contributions to the community and to the veterans' organizations throughout the year.

"I want to thank you for this and God bless you," Hughes said.

"God bless you and God bless America," Hoibraten responded.

