

WWII Lessons...from Page 1A

America had been involved in the war only indirectly up to that point, supplying Great Britain food and other supplies to aid in the fight against the Nazis.

Retired U.S. Navy Chief Quartermaster Clarence E. "Bud" Johnson of Hiawassee enlisted as an apprentice seaman in 1939, when he was just 17 years old. At the time

of the Pearl Harbor bombing, he was serving in the Atlantic Ocean aiding in the pre-war effort.

The World War II Veteran, now 98, would go on to take part in the Battle of Iwo Jima in the last year of the war, but on Dec. 7, 1941, Johnson was an up-and-coming seaman on watch aboard the USS Rhind.

"Even though I was not at Pearl Harbor, I was up in the North Atlantic on my second destroyer as a 19-year-old kid," Johnson said.

When news of the surprise attack reached his ship, Johnson said that everyone thought it was a military exercise initially. This notion was quickly dispelled, however, once "this is not a drill" began repeating over and over on the loudspeakers.

It was a momentous and terrible time for those young patriots, and all these years later, Johnson still takes every opportunity to honor the victims of Pearl Harbor, where he had Christmas dinner in 1944 just a couple of months before reporting for duty at the famed Battle of Iwo Jima.

"I want to remember them and not forget how they served and sacrificed their lives for us, for our freedom, today," Johnson said. "To remember the people who never had an opportunity to raise a family and have a good life.

"All we can do is keep the memory of these people alive, keep their names alive and what they did alive. It's also important to recognize our veterans of all times and all wars who have sacrificed for the freedom of our nation and the world.

"If it wasn't for our veterans and people serving today, we wouldn't be walking the streets free. We would be under a communistic government; we wouldn't be free, and people should be free."

U.S. Air Force Veteran Rob Taylor of Blairsville was 9 years old when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. He was living in Miami, Florida, at

the time and was on his way home from a movie with his grandmother when he heard the news.

"On our way home, she stopped at her regular gas station for gasoline, and the owner came out," Taylor said. "He was white as a sheet and shaking. He walked up to the window and said, 'The Japs just bombed Pearl Harbor.'

"Of course, I didn't know what or where Pearl Harbor was, but my grandmother was in shock. We hurried home, which was about three or four minutes away, and told my grandfather and my parents."

Taylor said he remembers everyone being "kind of nervous" in the leadup to the war, because the general public knew the U.S. was providing aid to the European side, "but never expected this thing from Pearl Harbor."

Soon after the attack, the rationing began. Taylor recalls everyone meeting up at the school to sign up for sugar rationing, which was the first food item to be rationed, followed by coffee, meat, cheese and more.

Americans at home experienced these and other hardships during the war, but instead of defeating people's spirits, it united the country behind the sacrifices of the countless brave soldiers who had gone off to fight the war.

Janice Walters-Taylor, herself an Army Veteran during the Vietnam War and wife to Rob Taylor, said her grandparents had spoken with her about those days and the stateside effort, wherein everybody chipped in to stretch what they had because resources were spread so thin.

"The spirit of the nation was, 'Let's all get together,' and, 'We're all in this together,'" Walters-Taylor said. "Rationing happened pretty quickly and pretty drastically. Nobody could get new tires on their cars because tires went to the war effort."

Rubber, paper, metal and gasoline were rationed, too, "and if you didn't already own a car, you could forget

about it until after the war. It was drastic and immediate," Walters-Taylor said.

"The World War II era was the closest this country had ever come to socialism," Rob Taylor said. "Everything was rationed. When you went to the grocery store, you didn't worry so much about how much money you had but how many ration points you had.

"Still, I don't remember anybody grumbling about having to put up with the war effort. Everybody came together. They accepted it graciously, and believe you me, when they found anybody cheating on the system — things like forging ration stamps and hoarding food — they were quickly turned in and dealt with."

And even though these sacrifices were imposed upon the populace, with everyone pitching in both at home and abroad, such hardships ultimately proved to be temporary, as freedom offered people better inspiration with which to fight and eventually defeat the Axis Powers.

Taylor is a Korean War Veteran, having served some 130 miles north of the 38th Parallel at Chodo Island in North Korea. Unfortunately, Taylor said he is finding that the level of civic-mindedness among the public has declined over the years.

"Everything for all those war years was 'we' and 'us,' while today, I find that it's 'I' and 'me,'" Taylor said. And Walters-Taylor agrees.

To solve the troubling lack of American nationalism they perceive today, the husband-and-wife duo propose that schools bring back a strong emphasis on civics, including in-depth study of the U.S. Constitution and government.

"And we don't revere our military like we used to," said Walters-Taylor, who serves as president and chaplain of American Legion Auxiliary Unit 121. "Pearl Harbor is an indication of what happened in history, and if we don't embrace history and learn from it, we are doomed to repeat it."

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for canceling.

Voters can also access the My Voter Page at mvp.sos.ga.gov ahead of the election for information on voter registration status, mail-in application and ballot status, poll location, registration information on file with the county office, sample ballots and more.

Registered voters who will be at least 18 years of age by Election Day are eligible to vote during early voting, though Dec. 7 was the registration deadline for residents looking to participate in the runoff elections.

Election Day is Tuesday, Jan. 5, 2021, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. On Election Day, voters should report to one of the 11 pre-assigned Union County voting precincts: Ivy Log, Dooly, Gum Log, Blairsville, Pat Colwell, Trackrock, Coosa, Jones Creek, Owl Town, Choestoe and Suches.

People are not required to bring their mailed precinct cards, but they must show a valid photo ID to vote.

In addition to early in-person voting starting Dec. 14, the Electoral College was set to meet after press time Monday for state electors to cast their votes to determine the next president of the United States.

Donald Trump is still waging legal battles in several states, including Georgia, and it remains to be seen whether he will succeed in overturning Joe Biden's apparent national victory, especially if the former vice president secures 270 electoral votes to become president-elect.

Trump has alleged that widespread voting fraud and irregularities have interfered with fair and open elections in 2020, and the Georgia Bureau of Investigation announced last week it would be helping to

investigate such claims.

"On Tuesday, Dec. 8, the Georgia Bureau of Investigation met with officials from the Georgia Secretary of State's Office after receiving a request to assist them with investigations related to the 2020 General Election," GBI Public Affairs Director Nelly Miles said.

Continuing, "The GBI's role will be to assist in investigating specific cases identified by the SOS's Office. GBI agents will conduct interviews and investigative acts regarding allegations of fraud as reported to the SOS's Office."

The GBI has advised that reports of questionable election-related activities be made to the Elections Division of the Secretary of State's Office via <https://sos.ga.gov/cgi-bin/emailelectionscomplaint.asp>.

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several.

However, Judge Story denied his re-sentencing request, writing Dec. 7 that his medical conditions did not "rise to the level of extraordinary and compelling circumstances that justify compassionate release."

Apparently, Gowder had lodged a similar request with the Bureau of Prisons, as Story said he could not override the bureau's "denial of home confinement," citing case law that "the Attorney General has exclusive jurisdiction to decide which prisoners to place in the home confinement program."

The judge went on to say that he could only grant home confinement in instances where a "compassionate release" was warranted, which he had already denied Gowder.

Ultimately, Judge Story offered Gowder a compromise of sorts, postponing the start of his year and a day prison sentence from Jan. 4 to May 1, 2021, "to afford him an opportunity to be vaccinated."

Judge Story originally sentenced the men in June 2020 following their October 2019 conviction on more than 100 counts each of prescription drug fraud.

The sentencing hearings for the co-defendants had been postponed three times between March and June as the courts and country adjusted to the pandemic, and this is the second time Story has granted the men reporting extensions due to COVID-19.

Following sentencing, Heaton's attorneys asked that the case be reviewed in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit. A date for a hearing on the appeal will be set following the filing of legal briefs due Jan. 12, 2021.

Heaton and Gowder were originally arrested in 2016, alongside former Union General Hospital Emergency Room Director David Gowder

— Mike's brother — and charged with multiple counts of prescription fraud.

David Gowder avoided trial by entering a guilty plea in March 2019 to one count of prescribing oxycodone without a legitimate medical purpose. He was sentenced in June 2020 to 18 months in prison, and he began serving his sentence in July.

Give the "Gift of Food" to a senior this Holiday Season



MEALS ON WHEELS

Share the gift of a meal with home-bound senior citizens in Union County this holiday season through the Home Delivered Meal Holiday Gift Certificate Program. Purchase a holiday gift certificate through Union County Senior Center and meals will be delivered to one of our home-bound senior citizens through our Meals on Wheels program.

You can provide a meal for one day, a week, a month, or a year. The cost of one meal is \$3.95, one week is \$19.75, one month is \$86.90, one year is \$1,034.90. We are a 501c3 and all gifts are tax deductible.

Checks should be made payable to Union County Senior Center, "Holiday Gift

Certificate Program" and should be mailed or delivered to: Union County Senior Center, 95 Senior Center Drive, Blairsville, GA 30512.

From Thanksgiving until New Year's Day, meals will be delivered to our home-bound seniors along with a special card wishing Happy Holidays from the gift giver. Funding is essential and we have suffered budget cuts in state and federal funding, yet we have had a significant increase in the request for home delivered meals. We have not been able to supplement our meal program with the fund-raising events we normally have throughout the year, such as our yard sale, silent auction and craft bazaar. Please assist us in preserving this vital program.

Thank you for making a difference in your community! For more information call 706-439-6105. N(Dec16,22)CA