

LTC John A Hoehne Sr
9773 Blue Spring Rd
Megersburg PA 17236



INCOMING

THE NEWSLETTER FOR THE 3RD BATTALION
15TH FIELD ARTILLERY REGIMENT TOWED
FT MCCLELLAN AND ANNISTON AL

2025
New Year

VOL. 13

NUMBER 1

1 FEBRUARY 2025

3rd BATTALION



121st US ARMY RESERVE COMMAND

HHB & SVC BTRY
FT. MCCLELLAN

"B" BTRY
TALLADEGA

"A" BTRY
CULLMAN

"C" BTRY
GADSDEN

Commander's Corner

Well 2025 has arrived, I'm taking a moment to look back on the past year. To start, we held our 3rd Reunion at the Oxford Civic Center with meal catered by Jim-n-Nicks. I know I had a great time and I truly hope every one of you did as well; those who were unable to attend really missed out on an awesome event. We also found and added 10 more 3/15 Red Legs to our roster as the search continues.

This edition of the Incoming will give an accounting of our expenses over the past year along with where we are financially now. You'll also find the results from the survey everyone filled out at the Reunion, which will help lay out our course for future reunions. Also a historical accounting of the first JSU ROTC graduate assigned to the 15th FA Battalion.

Some photos from the Reunion, both individually taken and by our photographer are also included in this edition along with the link you can use to access all the photos. Remember there is no cost to you to download the photos. If you have any photos that you would like published in the INCOMING, send them to me and I will include them.

We are working on some really awesome things for the next reunion; more on that later.

I would like to take this opportunity to Thank each and everyone of you for truly making all of this so successful as none of this would be possible without you.

Allons
LTC John Hoehne
FA Last Commander



Chaplain's Corner with Chaplain Wes Hodgins

January 2025

As the ball dropped at midnight in Time's Square on new year's eve; Father Time, often pictured in December as a very old man moving slowly, is transformed into a "bouncing baby", full of energy and all kinds of "*possibilities*"! People look for a "*new start*" often making "*resolutions*", determining not to make the same bad decisions which brought calamity & ill health in the previous year. All of these "*resolutions*" are products of their will and strength to perform them.

The Apostle Paul wrote to the Church at Corinth about a "*New-Birth*" unlimited potential and powered by God, not moral-man! "***If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away, all things have become new.***" (2 Corinthians 5:17) Jesus once said to Nicodemus, a very "*religious-man*": "***you must be born 'from-above'.***" (John 3:3) His "*religious-efforts*" were not bringing him close to God as he had hoped they would. The "*indwelling*" of God's Spirit was what he truly needed to approach God! As we begin another "*Calendar-Year*" let me encourage everyone to include the reading of God's word to men from "*cover-to-cover*"; it is one continuous story of God's redemption of men. I find it refreshing to remember the "*New birth from above*" and the new insights I learn about the Creator each time I read it. "***His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness.***" (Lamentations 3:23) God desires the best for every man; we will find it as we walk "*hand-in-hand*" with Him each day of 2025.

-Chaplain Hodgins

Battalion Financial Report

So that everyone has an accounting of how the Battalion administers the funds, below is a listing of how the funds have been spent:

Starting Balance	\$1965.00
Donations (2024)	\$2836.00
Total	\$4801.00

Reunion Expenses

Venue Rental	\$0.00
Catering Fee	\$2836.00
Battalion Cake	\$100.00
Photographer	\$600.00
Reunion Invitations	\$544.00
St Barbara Napkins	\$155.00
Reunion Programs	\$210.00
Total Reunion Cost	\$4445.00

Additional Expenses

Incoming Yearly Costs	\$2000.00+
Funeral Wreaths (2)	\$600.00

Donations

Individual (2025)	\$1900.00
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Current Bank Account Balance	\$5209.42
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The current balance will cover the 2025 Reunion, anticipating a venue cost of \$800 with a charge of \$30 per individual per meal. Any remaining funds will contribute to publishing and mailing the Incoming, Funeral Wreaths, Condolence Cards and M114A1 Howitzers, which are otherwise personally funded by me.

A great big shout out to all you Red Legs and your families as we enter a New Year; may it bring joy and prosperity to each of you. I would like to take a moment to say to the Battalion Commander, and his lovely wife congratulations on another great Battalion Reunion, and to apologize for not being able to attend this year, as I had some medical conditions that prevented me from attending, but it was another great Reunion.

I would also like to Thank you for your contributions to the Regimental Fund, which helps to keep the Battalion Reunions going. The Fund is also used for buying flowers, sending bereavement cards, and get well cards to members of the Battalion, and to secure places for us to continue the 3/15th FA Reunions. Your support truly keeps us going.

Thank each and everyone of you
Donald Peak (CSM RET) USAR
3/15th Field Artillery Battalion





JSU and the 15th FA Battalion Connection

A Crane Hill, Alabama native, First Lieutenant George William Lott was commissioned from Jacksonville State University student commissioned on May 26, 1950. First Lieutenant Lott was a member of the 15th Field Artillery Battalion, 2nd Infantry Division in Korea. He was taken Prisoner of War during the Massacre at Hoengsong and later died on 31 August 1951. He had previously been reported missing in action in Korea on February 13, 1951.

On Feb. 12 and 13, 1951, at Hoengsong, elements of the 2nd Infantry Division suffered severe, tragic losses

**MASSACRE
AT HOENGSONG
by Gary Turbak**

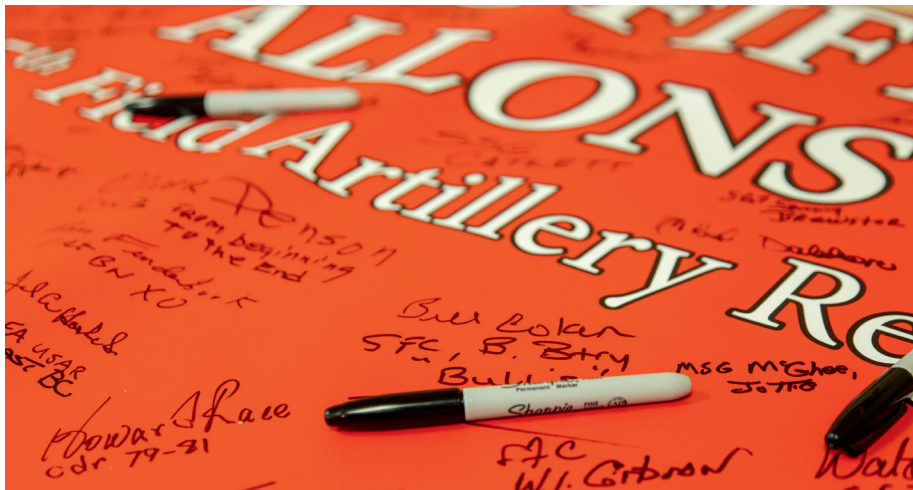
Reprinted with permission.
VFW Magazine - February 2001

The grisly scene, horrible almost beyond belief, shocked even the toughest men of the 7th Marine Regiment. Some averted their eyes. Others broke off their macho banter to talk in hushed, church-like tones.

It was death that spooked them -- death that hung like an eerie cloud over the narrow valley north of Hoengsong, Korea, that cold, quiet day in 1951.

In early February, with the Chinese offensive stalled, U.N. commanders prepared a counter assault across the center of the Korean peninsula. This time, however, Republic of Korea (ROK) troops were to do the bulk of the fighting -- with elements of various U.S. infantry, artillery and other units supporting them. The notion of Americans supporting ROK troops was very much an experiment -- one U.S. military leaders later regretted.





What U.N. commanders didn't know was that Communist forces also were launching a major offensive and had moved four Chinese and two North Korean divisions into the area north of the village of Hoengsong. On Feb. 11, ROKs tangled with Communist forces, quickly disintegrating the planned South Korean offensive.

At one point, GIs of the supporting 15th Field Artillery (FA) Battalion (2nd Division) encamped for the night, relying on ROK infantry for protection. When the Chinese attacked in the dark, the South Koreans fled. The enemy swarmed over the U.S. position. Some 204 artillerymen ultimately died, resulting in one of the most concentrated losses of American lives in the entire war, according to Joseph Gould in "Korea: The Untold Story."

Retreating ROKs streamed south past U.S. support forces, allowing the Chinese to flank American positions. Soon, the Chinese owned the narrow, twisting valley north of Hoengsong and the road that ran through it -- the only escape route.

Steep hills rose up on both sides of the road, turning the valley into a shooting gallery. The Chinese relentlessly rained mortar fire down on the withdrawing and vastly outnumbered GIs. Later came the hand-to-hand fighting.

"At times," said one battalion commander, "U.N. troops lined up on one side of the road and tossed grenades at the enemy attacking from the other side of the road."

FIGHTING WITHDRAWAL

BATTLE CASUALTIES

38th Inf. Regt.....462 KIA
15th FA Bn.....208 KIA
503rd FA Bn.....56 KIA

During one withdrawal, forward observer (for the mortar platoon) Sgt. Charles Long of M Co., 38th Inf. Regt., 2nd Div., chose to remain at his position atop Hill 300. It was rapidly being overrun, so he wanted

to better direct mortar fire on the Chinese. For a while, he held off the enemy with rifle fire and grenades, but his last radio message reported that he was out of ammo. He used his last words to call for 40 rounds of high explosive fire on his own position, by that time swarming with enemy soldiers. For his bravery, Long posthumously received the Medal of Honor.

American rescue forces fought their way north from Hoengsong to

the besieged units only to find that a river of Chinese soldiers poured in behind them. Points secured just an hour or so earlier reverted quickly to enemy hands.

U.S. infantry men tried to clear an escape route for the howitzers, supply trucks and other vehicles, but Chinese soldiers were everywhere. U.S. artillery fired point blank into ranks of attacking enemy, but it did little good.

As soon as the withdrawing GIs pushed through one Chinese strongpoint, they would run smack into another -- while enemy forces reformed behind them. Some 2,000 Chinese troops manned one enormous roadblock. But the route south was the only way out. So the Americans continued to run this meat grinder of a gauntlet toward Hoengsong, taking heavy losses all the way.

Finally, the column of weary survivors reached Hoengsong. GIs who made it to the village joined a more general and less hazardous retreat farther south and lived to fight another day. Yet in the little valley to the north there was only death.

‘ENORMOUS GRAVEYARD’

On March 7th, the 7th Marines re-entered the area north of Hoengsong for the first time since the rout three weeks earlier. Frozen in time -- and frozen literally -- the battle scene remained eerily preserved. “Everyone looked into the valley and saw the smoke twisting toward the sky,” wrote Marine Bill Merrick in his book *Tan Vat*. “The smoke came from overturned trucks and jeeps. They had burned so long only the frames remained. The area looked like an enormous graveyard with the bodies buried. The troops lay in the road, in the rice paddies, and in the cabs of the trucks that had not caught on fire.”

Hundreds of GI bodies remained where they had fallen. “We had to push arms, legs, and heads to the side of the road so vehicles behind us would not run over dead soldiers,” wrote Marine Rod Bennett. Some GIs had been stripped naked by enemy soldiers. One naked, dead soldier lay across the barrel of an anti-tank gun. In many trucks, dead Americans lay behind the wheel or hung out the doors. One truck contained two lifeless GIs and two dead Chinese soldiers.





“The road was blocked by a Sherman tank with one set of tracks blown off,” wrote Merrick. “The hatch was open and the tank commander was hanging out of it. His jacket was full of holes, and blood made a big design on his back. Two GIs with their hands tied behind them had been shot in the back of the head. There were powder burns on the back of the caps they wore.”

Marines, sickened by the sight, erected a sign along the body-strewn road. It read: “Massacre Valley, Scene of Harry S Truman’s Police Action. Nice Going, Harry!”

U.S. units suffering losses in the Hoengsong debacle included elements of the 38th and 17th Infantry; 15th, 503rd, 49th, 96th and 674th FA battalions; 82nd Anti-Aircraft Artillery Automatic Weapons BN.; and the 187th Airborne RCT.

Several outfits incurred severe battle deaths. Korean War Vet Dick Ecker, using the Army’s Adjutant General’s Korean War Casualty File, determined the following breakdown by unit:

- * 15th FA BN. -- 208 (106 KIA & 102 in captivity)
- * 503rd FA BN. -- 56 (27 KIA & 29 in captivity)
- * 38th Inf. REGT. -- 462 (328 KIA & 134 perished in captivity).

Among the 15th’s dead was its commander, Lt. Col. John Keith, and Master Sgt. Jimmie Holloway, both of whom died after being taken prisoner. “Holloway was recommended for the Medal of Honor, but it was downgraded to the Distinguished Service Cross,” according to the 15th’s historian, Dan Gillotti.

Ecker summed it up succinctly: “It was, of course, the nature of the fatalities in this action that was the real tragedy -- many of them MIA, never found and declared dead or captured and died in captivity.”

Because military authorities tried to hide the extent of the disaster, casualty figures regarding the Hoengsong massacre are extremely jumbled. But according to a Times war correspondent, “It was part of the most horribly concentrated display of American dead since the Korean War began.”

Gary Turbak writes from Missoula, Mont. He is a Vietnam veteran.

The Cannoneer

12 February 1978

THE CANNONEER

Vol. I, No. 6 3d Bn, 15th FA, Ft. McClellan, AL 36205 February 12, 1978

B BATTERY RECEIVES AWARD

B Battery of Talladega was recently presented an impressive award for having the most accessions to its unit during the month of January, 1978. This plaque will be given each month to the unit in the 405th CA Group Command Area which has the most accessions. The plaque is engraved with the unit's name each time it wins. When it is full, the unit whose name appears most often will retain it permanently. There is every reason to expect a 3d Battalion unit to win it each month.

Congratulations B Battery! Keep up the good work!

FORTHCOMING DRILL DATES

March 11 - 12, 1978

7:20 a. m.

April 8 - 9, 1978

6:50 a. m.

May 20 - 21, 1978

7:20 a. m.

IT PAYS TO COME TO DRILLS

A T DATES SET

In contrast to last year's indecision about the dates and place of Annual Training, the battalion has secured a definite direction for this summer's training.

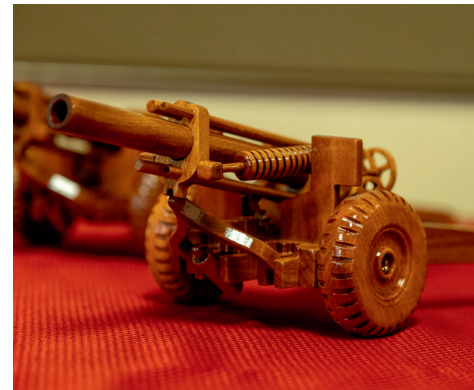
The battalion will be training during the period 8 - 22 July 1978 at Camp Shelby, Mississippi, this year.

Some of the unit members have been to Camp Shelby before and relate some terrific war stories about the place. It is not certain just how authentic all of these stories are. It is important, then for each member to plan now for an enriching encampment.

Who knows, we might even return with stories to top those we have from Fort Sill, Fort Gordon, Fort McClellan, Fort McCoy and Camp Shelby.

ATTENDANCE AT DRILL MORE IMPORTANT

Recent changes in Army Regulations place a greater emphasis satisfaction (See DRILLS, Page 4)



2025 Reunion Information

Date

13 December 2025

Time

1100 - 1600

Location

The Venue at the Coosa Landing
Gadsden AL

Cost

\$30 per person

Caterer

Downtown Chief

Menu

Fried Chicken
Hamburger Steak w/onions
Smoked BBQ Pork Butt
Mashed Potatoes w/Gravy
Whole Green Beans w/Bacon
Whole Kernel Corn
Sweet Hawaiian Rolls w/Butter
Sweet and Unsweet Tea
Cake

Dress Code

Business Casual
St Barbara is Authorized

Invitations

Will be mailed 1 September

February 12, 1978

THE CANNONEER

Page 2

RECENT GAINS TO THE UNIT

It is a pleasure to welcome to the Battalion the following men who have joined us since the last issue of THE CANNONEER.

HHB

SP4 Hanna, SP4 Focht, SP4 Williams.

SVC BATTERY

SP4 Potts.

B BATTERY

PVT Milner, PFC Curry, SGT Wilson, SGT Linbaugh, SP4 Hawkins, SP4 Hutchinson, SSG Morrow, SSG Reghness, SGT Silmon, PVT Taylor, PVT Dates, LT Fowler.

C BATTERY

1SG Owens, PFC Miller.

Our B. C.'s...

The subject of this column this time is 1LT Donald L. Robertson, commander of A Battery in Cullman. LT Robertson is a native of Winston County, where he graduated from Addison High School.

He received his commission from the Alabama Military Academy and came to us from the National Guard.

A surveyor with David Owens & Associates, he resides in Cullman with his wife and son, David. We are happy to spotlight this young commander as we end this series of articles.

✠ Chaplain's Corner ✠

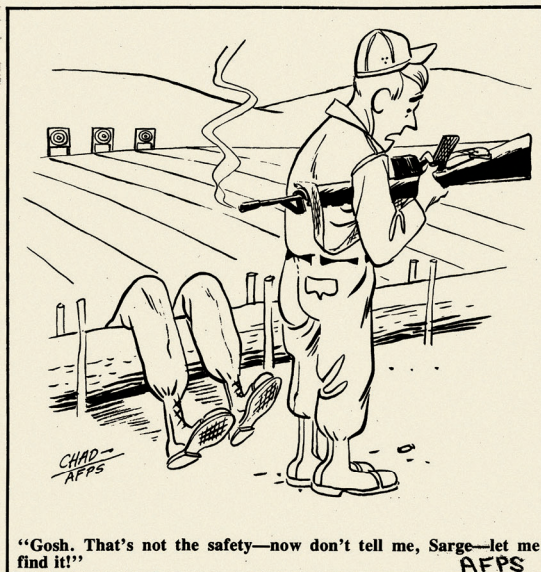
When I first joined this battalion over a year ago, I thought then that it had a more promising future than any other reserve organization I knew anything about. My expectations were based upon the fact that the leadership, only a few of whom were trained in field artillery, was forthright and serious and yet reasonable and fair.

No experience since then has changed that point of view. There have been many experiences to support it.

Yes, there have been times when an individual has felt he was getting the "short end of the stick." Strong leadership, however, has permitted such individuals to voice their opinions. Corrective action has been taken in several circumstances. The best interest of the members of this battalion, in keeping with unit commitments, has been of highest importance.

As I leave the battalion, I feel proud of my association with you people. I thank you for your kindness and support. But most of all, I commend you for the cooperative--cohesive spirit which I have often felt among you.

I feel confident, more than ever that this will become one of USAR's great battalions. God bless you.



PROMOTIONS

Congratulations are in order for the following individuals in this battalion upon their recent promotions to the grades indicated:

1st LT Nathaniel Owens, HHB
SSG Ronald Burke, HHB
SSG Gifford McCain, HHB
SSG James Bundrum, HHB
SP5 Aubrey Holland, C Battery
PV2 Donald Clardy, C Battery

Others nearing qualification for MOS change are to be promoted when requirements are fulfilled.

Elizabeth Helen is the name SGT and Mrs. Ashley have given the daughter who came into their home on February 2. She joins three other children in the Ashley home. B Battery and the battalion send their best wishes to this family.

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SHORT BLASTS!

It seems a large number of the 3/15th FA wives are pregnant. Is the reason the recent cold wave, the passions of our men or that the 3/15th FA men are just irresistible?

SP5 RON PITTS, a member of HHB, won third place in the 121st ARCOM Highpower Rifle M14/M16 Match. SP5 Pitts will go to Ft. Meade, MD, in March to be in the FORSCOM Matches as a member of the ARCOM Rifle Team. We wish him and the team much success and congratulate one of our own for this honor.





February 12, 1978

THE CANNONEER

Page 4

MILITARY AWARDS

As members of the 3d Bn, 15th FA, we are authorized by AR 672-5-1 and the lineage and honors of the unit to wear the Presidential Unit Citation and the Meritorious Unit Commendation. These awards were given to the 15th Field Artillery for action in World Wars I and II, Korea and Viet Nam. These may be worn only for the duration of your assignment to this Battalion, unless, of course, you were a member of the unit during the period for which the award was given.

These ribbons are worn on the Class A Greens and Khaki uniforms. They are centered in a row above the top of the right breast pocket.

If you are in doubt about what decorations you are authorized to wear, check your DD Form 214 or ask the AST of your Battery.

In the reserve program, there are two service ribbons which may be awarded. They are the Army Reserve Components Achievement Medal (ARCAM) and the Armed Forces Reserve Medal (AFRM). The former is given for four years of consecutive service in the USAR or National Guard. The latter is given for 10 years' consecutive service in reserve components. A ten year device is authorized for the 2nd award of the AFRM, and an oak leaf cluster for consecutive awards of the ARCAM.

Again check the record to determine just what you may wear.

DRILLS (from Page 1)

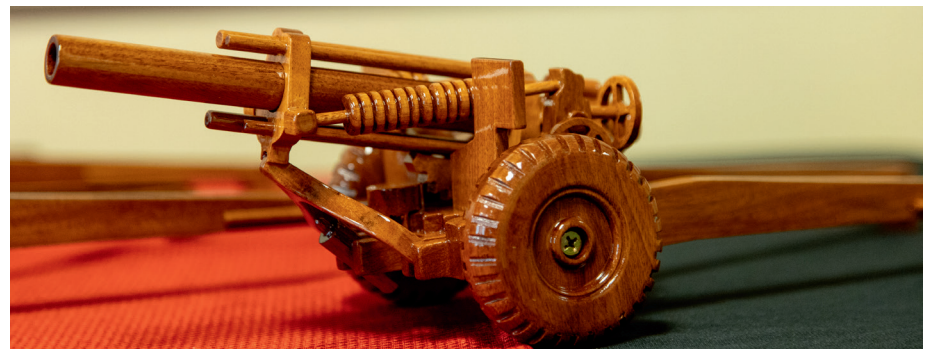
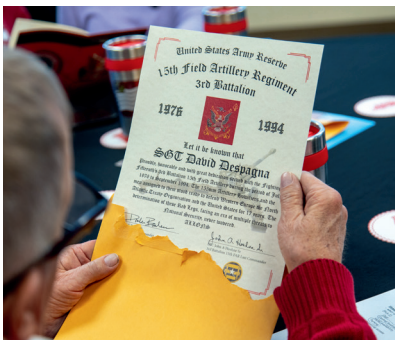
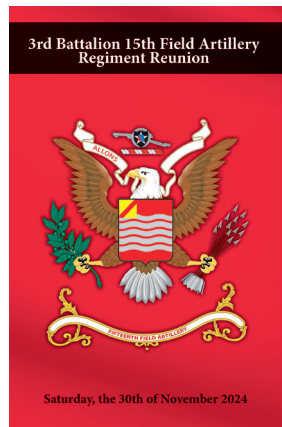
factory attendance at Army Reserve drills. The regulations provide that individuals who receive a "U" for unsatisfactory drill attendance for five times in any 12 month period will be discharged under a General Discharge.

Unsatisfactory drill attendance is given when an individual fails to attend a drill without making appropriate arrangements to perform equivalent training or in some other way fails to perform satisfactorily in his drill responsibilities. Each Inactive Duty Training week end consists of four drills. Failing to make provisions for attendance for a week end constitutes four "U's".

The 12 month period begins upon receiving the first "U".

A General Discharge must be contrasted with the Honorable Discharge, which the overwhelming majority of individuals receive when leaving the reserves. Receiving a less-than-honorable discharge would likely hinder one in finding employment at some future date.

The commander has urged individuals who have decided to leave the reserve program to come talk with his supervisor about it. It is hoped that no one will permit this General Discharge to be applied to him for unsatisfactory drills.





Here is the link to the pictures from the 3rd Battalion Reunion.

<https://www.rlmoore.com/army-2024>

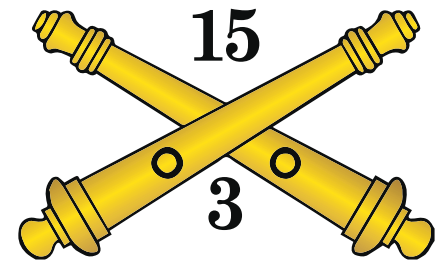
- 1) Please select twenty (20) pictures that you would like to be included in the book.
- 2) After making your selections, please email the photographer so they can send you the form to fill out.
- 3) Once you have filled out the form make sure your selections are correct then email the form back to them
- 4) Be sure to double-check the picture numbers to ensure we include the correct ones in the book.
- 5) Share with anyone who may not have given me their email addresses.

Please feel free to contact me (256-599-0612) or Rick (256-676-8219) if you have any questions.

Thank you!











Reunion Survey Results

These are the results from the Survey that was filled out at the 2024 Reunion. The Central location will most likely be Gadsden and the time of year will continue to be December. So far we have had great success with the Buffet and we will continue with that keeping the meals different each year and for the Cost we will be at \$30 per person.

Timeframe

Summer 19

Spring 19

Winter 31

Time of Day

1100 - 1600 hrs 49

1700 - 2200 hrs 11

Important Considerations

Cost 11

Central Location 49

Hotel Accommodations 14

Parking 12

Meal Type

Plated 13

Buffet 47

Cost

\$25-30 32

\$30-40 22

\$40-50 13

Additional Considerations

Cash Bar 2

Handicap 11

