**Unit 2: Capture**

Students analyze multiple primary sources to learn about the daily life of a POW, analyze and critique the POW experience during 20th century wars, and identify and evaluate the factors which impact the POW experience.

**ACTIVITY 1: Central Question Hypothesis**

1. Hand out the Capture: My Perspective (found below) sheet to each student.
2. Pose the central question — what happens to a United States military personnel when they are captured by the enemy during war time?
3. Have each student write their answer on the Capture: My Perspective sheet. Discuss the students’ answers.
4. Hand out and discuss the Capture Rubric (found below) with the students. The Capture Rubric outlines and identifies the essential components and content necessary to fully answer the central question at the end of the Module. Students should use the Capture Rubric in the creation of their final expanded answer.

**ACTIVITY 2: Creating Context**

1. Explain to students they will be learning about the American POW experience.
2. An option for creating context about the POW experience is the film, “Into The Mouth of the Cat: The Lance P. Sijan Documentary.” It is a 30-minute documentary about Captain Lance P. Sijan, a POW in North Vietnam. The documentary demonstrates how his family values intersected with the Air Force’s core values of “Integrity first, service before self, and excellence in all we do.” It also exhibits the Code of Conduct and why it must be a part of every military professional’s lifestyle. The documentary can be accessed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3I1hft2lNzs>
3. Have students complete the Student Viewer Guide (found below) sheet as they watch the film.
4. Using the completed Student Viewer Guide, discuss the film and the central message(s) the students identified.

**ACTIVITY 3: Capture Interviews**

1. Introduce the different transcript excerpts to students. Explain that the interviews were conducted with actual American POWs from a variety of wars.
2. The transcript excerpts are specific to the themes in this unit (Unit 2 - Capture). Explain that some go into more detail than others. Students are to read and be able to discuss the transcript excerpts.
3. Hand out the Interview Analysis Guide sheet (found below) to students. Review the sheet and discuss expectations.
4. Based on the unique needs of the classroom, have students read interview transcripts individually, in pairs, or in small groups.
5. A variety of transcript excerpts are provided. Select a few or use them all to provide for a wide-range of POW experiences to share/discuss as a class. Disseminate interviews to students. (Francis Agnes, Michael Craig Berryman, Rhonda Cornum, Prestee Davis, Melvin Dyson, Samuel J. Farrow, John McCain, James Stockdale, and Bob Windham)

6. In addition to the transcript excerpts, the following primary sources provide additional information for students:

* Bataan Death March Map (found below)
* WWII German POW Camps Map (found below)
* Prisoners of War in American History: A Synopsis (found below)

7. Have students complete the Interview Analysis Guide and the Capture: Revisiting the Question with More Perspective worksheet (found below).

8. Engage students in a discussion concerning what happened to the military personnel in the interviews. Discuss differences in wars, cultures, and individual circumstances. Use the maps, historical information and other research sources to add additional clarity to the information at hand.

9. Extension Activity: Have students create a table to compare and contrast the attitude toward and treatment of POWs in different wars, in different geographic regions and by different cultures. Students should compare 2 or more situations. Additional research is encouraged for a more robust product.

**ACTIVITY 4: Code of Conduct & Lieber Code** (See tab under <http://louisianaoldstatecapitol.org/education/lessson-plans-for-current-exhibits/> called “Leiber Code, Code of Conduct, and the Geneva Convention”)

1. Explain to students that the Lieber Code was established in 1836 as the first formal codification of behavior for the U.S. Army.
2. Explain to students that after the Korean War the U.S. Department of Defense created The Code of Conduct, which American military personnel were expected to follow. The Code requires steadfast resistance against the enemy.
3. Hand out a copy of The Code of Conduct and Lieber Code sheets to students. Have students read the primary sources as individuals, in pairs, or in small groups.
4. Provide each student with a copy of the Written Document Analysis Guide to use while reading the two primary sources.
5. Students should be able to access additional resources as necessary.
6. Extension Activity: Have students write a short essay to address the following questions:
   * Which items in the Code of Conduct are most important? Why?
   * Which items in the Code of Conduct are most difficult to follow? Why? List specific examples.

**ACTIVITY 5: The Geneva Conventions**

1. Discuss with students how the Geneva Conventions are about people in war and the basic rights of prisoners (civil and military) during war, protections for the wounded, and protections for civilians in and around the war zone.
2. Group students into teams and provide each team with a chapter from the primary source
   * Prisoners of War: Laws that Apply to Prisoners of War—Chapter 1
   * Rights of Prisoners of War—Chapter 2
   * Guidelines for Interrogation, Communication and Resistance—Chapter 3

a. The third Geneva Convention protects prisoners of war and consists of hundreds of Articles.

b. Provide each student with a copy of the Written Document Analysis Guide to use while reading the Prisoner of War primary source.

c. Have student teams read their chapter of the primary source Prisoners of War.

d. Have students answer the following question on their Capture: Revisiting the Question sheet and be prepared to discuss: How does The Code of Conduct, the Lieber Code, and the Geneva Conventions impact military personnel once captured by the enemy?

e. Discuss the students’ answers to the question.

f. Post three large sheets of paper on the wall for each of the primary sources (Chapters 1, 2, 3).

g. Have each group answer their question and write the five specific examples on the large sheet of paper.

h. Once all three questions have been answered, give each student a few sticky notes. Have students rotate through all questions/answers, write additional thoughts/questions on the sticky notes, and place them on the associated large piece of paper.

i. Have each group review the sticky notes on their large piece of paper. If needed, they should complete additional research to answer each question. Have student groups share their responses, questions, and their newly formulated answers with the whole class. Discuss.

**ACTIVITY 6: American POW Infographic**

1. Ask students if they know how many American POWs have been captured over the years and in WWI, WWII, Korea, Vietnam, Gulf War, and Iraq.
2. Provide each student with a copy of ***U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs— Former American Prisoners of War*** charts. (Found below.)
3. Ask students if they know what an infographic is (examples can be found on-line with a simple search). Define infographics as visual representations of information, data, or knowledge. These graphics present complex information quickly and clearly, such as in signs, maps, journalism, technical writing, and education. Explain to students that they are to create an infographic, which quickly and clearly communicates the statistics from the ***U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs—Former American Prisoners of War***.
4. Hand out the Capture: Beyond the Statistics sheet. Provide students time to create the infographics on the Capture: Beyond the Statistics sheet. (Found below.)
5. Have students share their infographics with classmates. Discuss as a class.

**ACTIVITY 7: Central Question with Rubric**

1. Hand out the Capture: Reassessment sheet to each student.
2. Have students re-answer the central question using the Capture Essay Rubric on the Capture: Reassessment sheet. (What happens to a U.S. military personnel when they are captured by the enemy during wartime?)
3. Remind students of the expectations on the Capture Essay Rubric and what needs to be included in the essay response. Utilize established classroom writing expectations. They will need to defend their historical claim with evidence from the interviews, The Code of Conduct, the Lieber Code, the Geneva Conventions, and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs document.
4. This assignment can either be completed in class or given as homework and turned in the next day.
5. All students or select students/volunteers should share their essay response to the central question.
6. Use the Capture Essay Rubric to assess each student’s response.

**CAPTURE: MY PERSPECTIVE**

Central Question:

**What happens to U.S. military personnel when they are captured by the enemy during war time?**

Name of POW: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

According to the interview transcript, what happened to the POW when captured?

How does The Code of Conduct, the Lieber Code, and the Geneva Conventions impact U.S.personnel once captured by the enemy? Use 5 specific examples from the primary sources to answer.

**1.**

**2.**

**3.**

**4.**

**5.**

**CAPTURE: ESSAY RUBRIC**

**Central Question: What happens to U.S. military personnel when they are captured by the enemy during war time?**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **3** | **Thorough discussion of capture which is richly supported with**  **relevant facts, examples, and details.**  **The primary source documents and interviews are analyzed,**  **synthesized, and woven into the answer.**  **Specific examples and mention of the Code of Conduct, Lieber Code,**  **Geneva Conventions, and statistics are included.** |
| **2** | **Discussion of capture supported with relevant facts, examples, and**  **details.**  **An analysis of the primary source documents and interviews are**  **included in the answer.**  **The Code of Conduct, Lieber Code, Geneva Conventions, and**  **statistics are included.** |
| **1** | **Attempts to discuss capture and support with facts, examples, and**  **details.**  **Discussion reiterates the contents of primary source documents and**  **interviews.** |
| **0** | **Not completed.** |

**NOTES:**

**STUDENT VIEWER**

**VIDEO ANALYSIS GUIDE**

**PRE-VIEWING - Title of video/film:**

**VIEWING -** Take notes below to help identify the central message of the video/film.

**POST-VIEWING -** List the concepts or ideas communicated in the video/film.

What is the central message of the video/film?

**Viewing**

**CAPTURE:** 

**REVISITING THE QUESTION WITH MORE PERSPECTIVE**

Central Question:

**What happens to U.S. military personnel when they are captured by the enemy during war time?**

*After reading the POW interview transcript excerpts and learning about The Code of Conduct, Lieber Code, and Geneva Conventions, provide another answer to the Central Question by writing an essay. What happens to U.S. military personnel when they are captured by the enemy during war time? Use additional pieces of paper as needed. How did your answer to the Central Question change from your initial response?*

**Unit 2 - ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW - FRANCIS W. AGNES**

**Francis W. Agnes, World War II**

(INT—Interviewer, FA—Francis W. Agnes)

INT: How long were you a prisoner of war and where?

FA: I was captured April the 9th of 1942 in the Philippines on the Bataan Peninsula, and I was held captive for 43 months.

INT: Okay. You did the Bataan death march?

FA: April the 9th, 1942, at 19 years old, it was quite a shock to be surrendered to the Japanese forces. We were captured on Mariveles Airstrip, and from there, the squadron that I was with, we joined others, and proceeded to make the Bataan Death March. The Bataan Death March is about 75 miles plus in distance, which in this day and time it doesn’t seem like much, runners run that in just a matter of hours, but when you’re doing it under starvation, and being held captive and sit in the hot sun for an hour to five to seven hours at a time, and then march just a few kilometers, and being made to sit again, it wasn’t long until many of my comrades met their demise entering that march.

INT: Do you happen to know how many people marched and how many died?

FA: The figures are really rough, but we started, as I recall, with about 70,000, and we lost some 20- plus thousand during that march, or more. It wasn’t all through the fact that they were weakened condition and through starvation, but through atrocities such as being shot along the way, or actually, I witnessed people being buried alive.

INT: Why were they buried alive?

FA: Because the enemy decided that they should use that as a means of proving to them that they were the superior. They would have a hole dug and then have Americans throw dirt on top of them.

INT: Did you ever have to do that?

FA: No, I never did have to do that. Like I say, I did witness it, and it was their way of telling us we are now in control. You are not in control. Along the route, also, we had the Philippines who would come out and try to give us some sugar cane or pass water to us and so forth. At the same time, the Japanese just used rifles or bayonets and got rid of them and also the person that they were trying to pass it to. There were pools with, uh water, or potholes, I would say, which really, you could see bodies in them, and you knew the water was contaminated, and those that were able to would run down there and try to fill their canteen, and of course they became one of those that were in the water. If they would have got a canteen of water, I am sure that it probably would have hurt their stomach, and they would have had diarrhea or something like that afterward anyhow.

INT: How did you make it?

FA: I made it, I think, primarily because I was young, and I did not spend the time on the march that others did. I had seen rapidly that I could break from and sneak around, and if there was a next column movement, instead of staying in that hot sun, I would go forward, and I got from my place to Camp O’Donnell in five days. During that period, I had one rice ball, one canteen of water.

INT: What was the very first image that comes into your mind, the very first one when you heard the words Bataan Death March?

FA: The thing that comes into my mind when I heard the words Bataan Death March, immediately I think of a young boy who was just scared to death, and doesn’t know what’s going to happen, and doesn’t understand what’s going to happen, which was me. And then I think of my fellow squadron personnel, and soon we were separated along the march, and of course many of them never did come home. And at the same time, I think of all the others that we left along that march. And why I made it, don’t ask me, other than that man up above was helping.

INT: Did you have to walk – what did you think as you walked past bodies?

FA: Well as I, you know, there’s a strange thing on this too, as you walk past bodies, you were at a position to where you could not help, it was your own life that you had to think of. If you were walking with a comrade and they fell because of weakness or something, and you tried to pick them up and help them, they shot the person, and then they would shoot you or bayonet you. So we were pretty much forced with the enemy and in their arms to keep moving and moving on that march, as long as we were able to sustain and do it. So, inevitably, if you were going to help someone, you were going to be part of that person on the ground.

INT: You also were on one of the hell ships. What is a hell ship?

FA: I spent time at Camp O’Donnell, and at that time I was very ill with a fever, and I managed to get to go to Camp Cabanatuan, which was, presumably, had a hospital in it, and they had medication. Fortunately, I was put on the hospital site and did receive, to this day, I think it’s APC, which is a form of codeine aspirin that the military used at that time. And as a result, I was able to get rid of the fever - the Dengue fever that I had, and became in a fairly good state of health. And then about a year-and-a-half later, I was put on a detail, which was going to Japan. We marched down to the Manila Bay in September of ‘43, and then we boarded a small ship, which is, we termed them “Hell Ships” because they were just small transport cargo ships with holes in the front and holes in the half of where, we stayed in the holes. The cooking that was done for the prisoners of war that we were there, was done on the upper deck. It had large steam kettles, and in those steam kettles was cooked rice or soup or broth, which we were fed, but in the meantime, everybody was forced to stay within that hole. We were fortunate in that we were not hit by any of our friendly fire of the Americans, which was enemy of Japan. We went through the Formosa Straits. The Formosa Straits are, at that time of the year, in September, are very rough. Our hell ship, or the boat we were on, the vessel we were one, was escorted by a tin can and a destroyer, and one other vessel, which was underwater most of the time. The water came up and did tear off the cooking equipment that we had on our deck, and then after we got through the rough area, they were able to repair it to where we could prepare food. I helped prepare some of the food. While we were going through the Formosa Strait, we were zigzagging, and I’m sure there were submarines, American submarines, in the vicinity, because of the zig-zagging, and when we got to Formosa, we tied-up in the port there for three days, until the shipping lanes cleared before they moved us on into Japan.

INT: Were the conditions on the ship crowded? What were the sounds that you remember?

FA: What we had on the ship was enough space for one person to lay right, like logs, side by side, that’s all the space you had, and you weren’t, they weren’t allowed up on deck. We were kept in the hole, and that’s all. It was very, very seldom did they even open the top of the hole to where some air would come in. It was hot, dingy, and people died during that, and there was no way to do anything, but people died during the trip across.

INT: What did you do with the bodies?

FA: They laid there until we got to where we were going. Bodies stayed with us.

INT: What are your memories of being on that ship at night?

FA: My memories of that ship at night were those of attempting to rest while you could. At the same time, hoping that the person that you were a partner with was staying awake in the event that someone tried to slit your throat, because they were hungry and thought maybe they could get blood or something to drink. It was known that individuals would kill one another for the thought that they would obtain a food value out of such an item as drinking one’s blood. It wasn’t a pleasant experience, I can assure you of that, my life on a Hell Ship to Japan.

INT: What kind of a smell was there?

FA: As to odors on board the ship, of course all of us without bathing or anything for days on end, and no soap, sanitary conditions weren’t even, we didn’t even hear of that. It was a matter of surviving as best you could. And, of course, no one would criticize one another, because we were all in the same category, and it’s just an unhealthy condition, and since there was no air circulating and you’re living in minimum air, breathing and exhaling, inhaling and exhaling what there was, it was not the best that one would want to live under.

INT: What about drinking water?

FA: Drinking water was rationed very, very lightly. They did allow us to fill our canteens, and of course you would ration it to yourself as you went. Drinking water was rationed. It was - it was just - it’s a hard thing to explain, you really try to forget those type of memories when you’re in that situation and think of the good things that happened, but there was nothing good that happened. With one exception, I was up on deck at one time, and the fellow that was in charge of cooking, we spotted some American planes, and so we went to the side and started waving, and suddenly we realized, hey, they might decide to come down and bomb us – we better quit waving. So, there are some things that become humorous after a fact. After we got to Japan, why we were moved into a camp about 50 miles south of Osaka on the Port of Takow, and at that time, we spent the rest of my time in Japan.

INT: Did you know that other Hell Ships were being sunk?

FA: As far as the other ships that were going over, we had no idea what was happening, or whether they were sunk or anything. There was no news or communication of what was going on around us in the world, or very little, so we did not know. In fact, I did not know until I got back, after being liberated to the Philippines, and when I was in re-processing, I started looking for a fellow that I had graduated from high school with, and found out that he had been on one of the Hell Ships that was sunk. So that’s when I first really realized that some people were lost in transport to Japan. Little did we, those of us that was on them, going to Japan, little did we realize that the Americans were in that vicinity or near there. Although, rumors had it we were going to get support and we would soon be liberated and so on. And you still didn’t believe what you heard, because there was no direct communication.

**Unit 2 - ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW - MICHAEL CRAIG BERRYMAN**

**Michael Craig Berryman, Gulf War**

(INT—Interviewer, CB - Michael Craig Berryman)

INT: Tell me when you were captured, how long you were held, and where you were captured.

CB: I was shot down the 28th of January 1991. I was held for 37 days in Baghdad and I was captured just south of Kuwait City.

INT: What happened the minute you realized that you could be captured?

CB: Well, I was a section leader for a flight of two harriers and our mission had been to go up and see if we could find a Frog missile that had been launched on the Marines there in Kahfji. And as we were approaching the target area, my airplane had a mechanical failure and during the dive in the attack the in-flight refueling probe on the airplane came out and I wasn’t able to get my bombs off. My wingman was able to go ahead and get his ordinance off. We had attacked a convoy of vehicles there on the coastal highway, and coming off the target I got hit with a surface to air missile. And the airplane started spinning end over end. I finally ended up upside down at about 10,000 feet and started spinning down towards the ground. At that time I did not know that the tail had been completely blown off the airplane so I was trying to fight it to get back upright and get it out over the Gulf because we were only about three miles from the Gulf. And I fought the airplane, fought the airplane and I started seeing the ground rushing up at me and I said, “Well it’s probably time to think about getting out of it.” There was a point in time where I thought I would probably just ride it in because prior to the war starting, our Intel guys had told us that if you got shot down that you could expect the Iraqis to do some pretty nasty stuff to you. And they showed us some pictures of some of the Kuwaiti Resistance that they had captured and they got these pictures. Showed this one guy who had his initials carved into his chest by the Iraqis. And they showed some guys who had had their ears cut off. One guy had his nose cut off, some pretty gruesome stuff. And I didn’t think I wanted to go through that so I thought about staying with the airplane. I finally decided that, well I got to at least give myself a chance to live through this rather than dying with the airplane. So I pulled the ejection handle and away I went.

INT: What happened when you landed? Were you injured?

CB: No I wasn’t. I was very lucky. I pulled the handle and I know from my training that it takes 1.2 seconds from the time I pull that handle until I had a parachute. But it was the longest 1.2 seconds of my life. I pulled the handle and I was still sitting in the airplane. And I’m thinking, “This is just one more thing that’s going to go wrong. I don’t have any choice anymore.” So I looked down to make sure that I had in fact armed the seat and it was armed. About that time the canopy exploded in place and I felt the cold air rush in. I watched my maps and stuff get sucked out down towards the ground and then I watched the rocket motor fire between my legs and the next thing I felt was this big jerk as the parachute opened up over me. I was coming down in the chute and the Iraqis started shooting at me as I was coming down in the chute. Of course I wasn’t in the chute very long because I had ejected pretty low and I hit the ground. Kind of in shock at first. I just kinda sat there and then something in the back of my mind said, “Hey you gotta get up and you gotta start running; these guys are coming after you.” So I popped off my parachute and started running across the desert towards this little sand dune. I figured I could run. As I started running they started shooting at me again. And finally I got on the other side of this sand dune and found that there was this Iraqi armored personnel carrier rolling up, and because he was behind that sand dune I couldn’t see him. So I basically just ran myself right into another unit. And that’s when I became a POW.

INT: When you saw that thing coming over that dune, what did you think?

CB: You can’t say them on tape. I knew that things were not good.

INT: Were they angry with you? Did they just capture you and lock you away?

CB: Oh no. There was probably a dozen or so Iraqis on top of this armored personnel carrier and they all jumped off and jumped on top of me. They started beating on me and kicking on me and they started pulling off all my flight gear. And in my G-Suit pockets I had kept about three days worth of survival rations just in case something had gone wrong. Well when they found those survival rations they all just backed off away from me and started passing the food out amongst themselves. And that was probably the only time in my 37 days of dealing directly with the Iraqis that I ever felt sorry for them. Because these guys, they were starving and you could tell; they were a rag-tag bunch. And our bombing to that point had been pretty effective. And of course as soon as they got through eating all my food they jumped back on me and started kicking on me and beating on me again. And I didn’t feel sorry for them anymore.

INT: Where did you go after you were captured?

CB: I went through three different places there in Kuwait. I went to a company size headquarters. I had gotten a neck injury and was bleeding from the neck and the face during the ejection. And they asked me some initial questions: name, rank serial number type stuff. Then they had their doctor there bandage me up. Then they took me to what was probably a division headquarters and finally to regimental type headquarters just outside Kuwait City. And during that interrogation there, the interrogator, he started asking me some questions and I was just giving him name, rank, and serial number, part of the Code of Conduct. And he finally jumped up and said, “Okay, Michael you’ve just made a big mistake.” And he stormed out of the room. I was concerned then. Immediately I had these two guys jump on me and start beating on me and kicking on me. And after a few minutes they had their fun. They put a blindfold on my face; they put some handcuffs on me from behind my back. Have you ever had handcuffs on?

INT: Tell me about it.

CB: The guys put the handcuffs on, and you know they got that little chain between the handcuffs? Well they were behind my back and I was laying on the floor when the put them on me. He grabbed that chain and he lifted me off the ground by that little chain. And what that did was it just tightened those cuffs as tight as they could possibly be on my hand. Then they took me upstairs and took me outside and started walking towards this armored personnel carrier that was waiting to take me farther north. And between me and the armored personnel carrier there was this line of Iraqi soldiers, a little gauntlet if you will. And as I walked by each one, each one got their turn to take their shot at me whether it be a rifle butt, or a kick, or a spit. They’d yell things about George Bush and my ancestry and the whole bit. I finally got into the armored personal carrier. I’m kind of nervous, wondering what’s going to be going on, trying to keep my sense about me so if I get a chance to escape then I’ll be ready. I’m blindfolded and handcuffed sitting in this thing with one of their soldiers when all of the sudden the back door swings open and two other Iraqis jump in. The guy with me starts punching on me. Well I had been a boxer in college so I could see underneath the blindfold when he was getting ready to swing at me so I could kind of roll with the punch a little bit. And it would take some of the strike away. Well that went on for a few more punches and finally I guess he figured out what was going on. So what he did was he took my head and he held it up against his knee and every time somebody would hit me, he wouldn’t hit me anymore but the other two guys would, I would get the full blow from those punches. And we continued to drive north. We got into Basra. I got turned over to Republican Guard. Now, the Republican Guard, they had been pounded by the B-52s, just night and day constantly. And they were mad. And I was the first American that they had seen and they were going to get their revenge on me. They took me into what had been an old school and this was now their headquarters. They took me into one of the rooms of the school and we started this interrogation process. There was an interrogator in front of me, and two guards on either side. And they started asking very simple, name, rank serial number type questions. And we finally got to the question he asked me what was my religion. And I said, well this is a pretty benign question. I can answer this; these are religious people. And I said, “Well, I’m Baptist.” And he said, “No, you’re a Jew.” And I said, “No, I’m Baptist.” He said, “No, you’re a Jew.” And now not only was I a Jew, which they hate. You can’t imagine how much they hate Jews. But now I was a lying Jew. So he motioned to this guy on my left to do something. And I could see out of the corner of my eye him swing back with something and he hit me right here below the knee. And I hit the ground, just excruciating pain. And I was laying on the ground and I looked up underneath the blindfold at him and he hit me in the leg with a lead pipe, and it snapped the bone like a chicken bone. And then he started yelling at me some more, asking me some more questions. And as I refused to answer them, they just started alternately beating me until I started answering their questions. And I was afraid that if I let them…cause I was laying there on my left side on my broken leg. And I said, you know, I can’t let them beat on my ride side all the time now. So I started rolling from one side to the other as they alternately beat me. I could see that this guy had hit me with a lead pipe and this guy was beating me with what looked like an axe handle or something like that. And that went on for probably ten minutes or so. And I guess finally they got the answers that they thought they were looking for and they just left. And they left me laying there on the floor. My leg hurt so bad that I couldn’t move. I tried to get up and I couldn’t; I couldn’t move. And I just lay there until they came in; they took me to the next interrogation. This interrogator the first thing he said was “Michael, unless you want me to have them break your other leg, you’re going to start answering my questions.” And at that point I figured well, maybe I’d better come up with a better thing than name, rank, and serial number and just taking what they dish out. So that’s when the real fun began.

INT: Tell me why the Code of Conduct is important.

CB: The Code of Conduct is important because it gives you a framework of all your activities when you’re a POW. And it gives you that foundation to build upon so that when you walk out of that prison camp a free man one day you can say I did the absolute best that I possibly could and you can be proud of yourself.

INT: Are there ways you couldn’t be proud of yourself?

CB: Yeah, if you do what the enemy asks of you. If you give in before absolutely possible, you’re always going to wonder, could I have done better? And that Code of Conduct gives you a framework to say hey, this is my starting point and this is how far I’m going to take it. This is how much pain or whatever I’m willing to live with.

INT: Do you believe in dying for the Code of Conduct?

CB: There were some things I was willing to die for, yes.

INT: Like what?

CB: I told myself that I’m never going to tell them where my squadron is based out of because I don’t want to be responsible for those guys. Because what was the real threat I thought was the terrorist threat. Those people making their way across the border, because they could move back and forth pretty easy, and having a terrorist threat take out our airplanes as they sat on the ground or killing some of our pilots there in the tents where they slept. And I really didn’t want to be responsible for that. I said I’m never going to tell them where my squadron’s based. If I have to die, I’ll take that information with me to the grave. And there were a couple of other things like that, little things. But they meant a lot to me.

INT: Is there one thing that they did that finally made you think, “Oh this isn’t worth not being able to walk again?

CB: Well, I had been giving the old John Wayne of just name, rank and serial number right up to the point where they broke my leg. Then I started answering some questions that I thought were not going to be of usefulness to them. They were very non-tactical type questions. And I said well I can deal with that. And then when the next interrogator said do you want me to have them break your other leg unless I start answering questions. I said I have got to come up with a better game plan than that. So I started this whole improvised story of where my squadron had been and that type stuff.

INT: Misinformation?

CB: Yes.

INT: Did they buy it?

CB: Yes. The Iraqi interrogators, for some reason, it didn’t seem that they took their information and correlated it from one interrogator to another. It seemed like you started fresh with each one and had to go through this whole elaborate story each time to bring him up to speed, which made the interrogations last a lot longer, which was not a good thing. But you could tell one thing, you could tell another one another thing, and more often times than not you’d not be caught lying. But when they did catch you lying, you paid for it.

INT: What did they do?

CB: They had a lot of things they liked to do. One of the things that they liked to do was they had this little kind of a rubber hose thing. They liked to beat you on the lower part of the legs with that rubber hose. They had a stick that they would do the same type thing, a little baton, like a police baton. A lot of times they would just hit you with their fists. Either closed fist or open handed. You’d get a rifle butt to the back of the head or something like that. There was even a couple of times where they’d catch you lying or you weren’t answering a question that they thought that you should, they’d put a pistol to your head and say, “Hey, if you don’t answer this question you’re going to die.” And more often times than not, it was not worth dying for. But the Iraqis were not very smart about this either cause almost invariably you could hear, right before they put the pistol to your head, you could hear a click. And you’d know that that was the clip coming out of that pistol. The thing you had to worry about was, “Was he smart enough to take that round out of the chamber before he took the clip out?” And sometimes they’d actually leave the round in there and discharge the pistol. We had a couple of guys get their eardrums blown out from the round going off.

**Unit 2 - ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW - RHONDA CORNUM**

**Rhonda Cornum, Gulf War**

(INT—Interviewer, RC—Rhonda Cornum)

RC: I’m Rhonda Cornum, and I was captured on the 27th of February 1991 while I was doing a search and rescue mission in Iraq.

INT: Tell me about the circumstances around your capture.

RC: Well, you know, it was, as it turns out…it was the last day of the war. Of course you don’t know that at the time, but we had -- I was with an Apache unit of the 101st and we were being very successful. We hadn’t lost an airplane. We hadn’t lost anybody, and we had blown up a lot of stuff, and so we were feeling fairly jubilant. And so it was about mid-afternoon and we got a call. Our pilot got a call on the radio saying, “Do you have the doc on board?” And that’s me. And he said, “Yes.” And he said “Well, do you have all her stuff?” And at this point I’m listening saying, “Oh, somebody got hurt.” He said, “We’ve got all her stuff and we have gas.” And he said, “Well, there’s this F16 pilot that got shot down. He’s got a broken leg.” They gave us his coordinates and they said, “Can you guys go get him?” So we thought that’d be a great mission. We haven’t really gotten--we’ve practiced a lot but we’ve never really had to go get anybody. We’ve hauled back prisoners, and we’ve hauled back guns. We never hauled back any Americans. So we took my Blackhawk and two Apaches and went whopping up to get this guy. Unfortunately, the same guys that shot down his F16 shot down my Blackhawk and so we crashed very quickly. It was a really bad wreck. We were going about 140 and they blew the tail boom off the helicopter. So there were eight people on board and five people were killed in the wreck and the three of us that were left were captured.

INT: What was going through your mind when you crashed? You pretty much know that capture is eminent?

RC: Well, actually, when you crash in a helicopter you pretty much think you’re going to be dead. And so the first thing I thought as I was recovering, I suppose, from this crash, I guess I was knocked out, was I think I’m dead. This must be one of these after out-of-body experience things. Well, then I have about five Iraqis guys come over and point their guns at me and try to stand me up, I thought well, I guess I’m not dead after all. So I was a POW which, you know, is better than being dead.

INT: What was the initial treatment like?

RC: Initially they were, they took, you know, my helmet and I took off my weapons and they took off all this stuff. And unfortunately for me I had two broken arms and I got shot during the crash and I had a dislocated leg, so it was--I certainly was no threat. I couldn’t move anything, hardly. It was painful. I don’t think they were particularly malicious but they weren’t particularly careful either. So getting thrown around and kicked around in the back of a pickup truck is painful when you’ve got a bunch of dislocated bones. So they certainly were not like we are when we capture people.

INT: Of course your situation in some respect or at least in one respect was different in that here the Iraqis had a female prisoner of war. America has had to deal with at least on the level, I say that because at Andersonville there were women who were POWs.

RC: Right. There have always been women who are POWs, and I would say it was a much more of a big deal to the American media than it was to either me or the Iraqis.

INT: What particular point did it hit you like, you know, I’m a female POW? Is that going to make any difference to the Iraqis?

RC: Not really. It’s just--I’ve always been female so that never really enters into it in my decision-making. And I didn’t think they would treat me particularly differently, and they didn’t.

INT: Go ahead and tell me the different area--any areas that you were held at, whether they have specific names or not?

RC: Right. Well, the first day they captured me and they captured Sergeant Dunlap and they dragged us to a bunch of different bunkers and interrogated us, and eventually they found somebody who could make a decision and they sent us to prison which was about 30 minutes away by truck and that was in Basra. And it was, it didn’t seem very military but it was sort of a half-underground jail, probably a county jail or something. I mean, you know, normal prison type thing. And we were in solitary confinement while we were there. The next day they took us to a--what they said was some kind of reserve military facility in Basra. We were there for all that day and one night and the next day. And that next night they loaded us up on a bus and that was the point that we found we had Stamaris by then, who was the third guy from our wreck who was hurt, and as it turned out they also captured Captain Andrews who was the guy we were going to pick up. So they took us all, the four of us to Baghdad. We got to Baghdad the next morning. We first went to some military facility. You know, we were always blindfolded every place you go, so you don’t know exactly where it is, but some military facility where there’s a bunch of military people. They interrogated us all again there and split us up. The injured people got taken to the Rashid Military Hospital, and I spent the rest of my time at the prison ward, I guess, at the Rashid Hospital. And they took Stamaris there and they took some other person there who I don’t know. And then after I guess three or four days there, they took all of us to whatever prison that the rest of the prisoners had been kept in, and that’s where they gave us the yellow POW costumes, and eventually the next day after that I guess took us to a hotel in downtown Baghdad where we got turned over to the Red Cross.

INT: Do you feel like you were prepared for what you experienced as a POW as far as the training instructions, that type of thing?

RC: Well, I felt like I was prepared, and whether it had much to do with training or not is an interesting question. I think it has to do with just having been in the military for a long time -- 13 years by then, and just realizing that, you know, that’s kind of how things go. You read military history and you know that there’s a certain small percentage of people that that happens to. I just happened to be one of them.

INT: How much intelligence or briefings had you gotten as far as earlier American, earlier POWs, and how they were treated and how you were treated?

RC: Well, honestly I didn’t get any. I had had a briefing about the Geneva Conventions and that I was supposed to be treated differently because I was a physician. I didn’t take my Geneva Convention card with me, so that was an irrelevant factor in my life and theirs. I wanted to be treated just like one of the guys, and that’s how it happened.

INT: Tell me about the interrogations that they went through.

RC: Well, actually, they were fairly benign as I’ve read about and talked to other people about getting interrogated. Like I said, it was the last day of the war and so I think by then they realized it was over. You know, the ceasefire was called the next morning. Now, so I don’t know what they were hoping to gain. They didn’t beat on us. I think they realized by then that they were going to have to give us back and giving back broken or dead POWs was not going to help their cause at all. So I mean, it was fairly benign.

**Unit 2 - ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW - PRESTEE DAVIS**

**Prestee Davis, Korean War**

(INT—Interviewer, PD - Prestee Davis)

INT: What were the circumstances that led to your capture?

PD: I was a former reservist and I was supporting C-Company First Battalion 24 Infantry. And the Chinese crossed the American lines on 26 November 1950 and the company that I was supporting was left back to old hill while the battalion moved back and we were captured.

INT: And state the country and date you were captured?

PD: I was captured on the 26 of November 1950 in North Korea.

INT: How old were you at the time?

PD: I was 22.

INT: Had you received any military training on what to do or how to act if you became a prisoner of war?

PD: After the war, they came up with the Code of Conduct.

INT: What was going through your mind at the time of capture?

PD: Getting out, trying to get out.

INT: Tell me what happened at that time of capture and how you were treated.

PD: The day I was captured just about everybody had been killed or wounded so I was the company that was left back and the company commander says well we will have to surrender. We hadn’t eaten in four or five days and we had no ammunition and everybody was wounded and no medical supplies so we are going to surrender. Anybody that wants to try, get out and try to make it own your own. So two of us took off and tried to make it on our own, and we all wound up at the same place a Chinese staging area.

INT: How far did you get before you were captured?

PD: Not very far because the Chinese were very good with martyrs and they had moved us into a little group. They didn’t try to kill anybody. They just moved us into little groups, and you stayed there until you were captured or tried to get away. And I tried to get out and I was not very far and I looked up and didn’t see nothing but Chinese with guns pointed at me so I put my hands up and a Chinese soldier told me to put my hands down because we will not harm you. So we went back to the staging area.

INT: Describe the scene at the staging area.

PD: Just a lot of bodies. Just a lot of American soldiers and like I said, we had not eaten and they gave us some food.

INT: Did you have any idea what to expect?

PD: Not really because from what I had seen, I’d seen prisoners that Koreans had captured and they had their hands tied behind them and then they shot them so I didn’t know what to expect. None of us knew what to expect

INT: Is there anything else you would like to add about that initial treatment? You said you did receive some food?

PD: They pushed the lines as you probably know way back to Tucson and so they moved us along the line. All the prisoners moved along the line. All the prisoners moved south, and it was the winter time and we were all cold. And then they moved us back North. All the way to the Yellow River to the POW camp, but we went along with the Chinese forces.

INT: How were you transported? You said you moved along the lines?

PD: By foot we walked.

INT: What was the weather like this time of year?

PD: It was cold, very cold. A lot of people would wind up with frostbite on fingers and ears.

INT: What was your physical condition like when you reached the POW camp?

PD: Wasn’t too good in the early part of my capture. I was very sick. I went from 160 to 97 pounds because at that time we wouldn’t get any food, any real food. Just cracked corn and millet and in this country they feed it to the cows. They don’t feed it to humans, and it was full of rocks and our teeth were breaking off.

INT: When did your first interrogation take place?

PD: Probably after we got to the regular POW camp in North Korea.

INT: And what was the name of that camp?

PD: POW Camp North Korea Number Five.

INT: Tell me a little bit about the camp. What did it look like?

PD: Just a basic camp. They had all the Black soldiers in one company, all the white soldiers in one company. They had all the Turks in one company. They had the French and English and Puerto Ricans the Spanish people in another company. Just a large area and everybody was separated and segregated.

INT: What were the buildings or tents?

PD: When we first got there, we lived in the building. They drove the Koreans out off then. We built our own building out of wood and straw. Matter of fact, we built two buildings - one a recreational building and one we lived in.

**Unit 2 - ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW - MELVIN DYSON**

**Melvin Dyson, World War I**

(INT - Interviewer, MD - Melvin Dyson)

INT: If you were to say yes, I was in good physical condition before I was captured.

MD: Well, I was in pretty good condition. I was young, just 18 and young and most people - most fellows have better condition when they’re 18 or 17, 18 when they get to be up in the forties especially.

INT: Now what happened the day you were captured?

MD: We were advancing all the time now this is the Argonne, the Battle of the Argonne. And we were advancing and all of that and I had sneaking hunch that we were going too fast, that we getting - I figured at one time we were in behind the lines, behind the German lines and which turned out to be that way. But there was nothing we could do. I was but a pilot, I was following orders and so forth and so on.

INT: So you were in Germany?

MD: No, I was in France actually, in France so this happened in France, all of this happened in France. The Germans had invaded France pretty much, and we were in there and also to drive them back out of there and get them out of the fields. That was the whole thing is French - you were in French territory.

INT: So what was the date? Do you remember the date of your capture?

MD: I think it was a 20 - seem like if I remember either on 23rd or something in September.

INT: What year?

MD: What year was that? Well I think it was about -- it could be ‘18 because after all we went in in ‘17 and it was quite a while before we went over up seas and it was probably around end of ‘18 - 1918.

INT: Who were you captured with, were you - was this the same unit that you were assigned with?

MD: I was not with anybody at the time that I was captured, I was captured alone, as far as that’s concerned, but the outfit that I was with that was captured was pretty well wracked up with that time - about the time that we were captured. There was some more captured but not with me, I was all alone.

INT: I mean had the - had you been told what to expect if you were to be captured?

MD: No, nothing ever - it wasn’t supposed to be captures you see. They never gave you any briefing on that. After all that’s a little too much.

INT: So you had no idea what to expect?

MD: No, we knew we were going - at least we knew we were going into a heavy battle, we knew that because when we started advancing we were really moving fast. So actually it didn’t surprise me that we - because we’d been in behind the Germans’ line before [inaudible word].

INT: There was poor leadership you just said?

MD: Well at later times, yes, at that time, no. We thought we were the cream of the crop and everything but at later years and later times and you’ve got history - absorbed a lot of history and stuff, they weren’t doing anything weren’t too good.

INT: Did you receive any survival training or instructions, did they say hey if you’re taken

MD: No, actually we were at that time we were - we were – no extra training on that, no. They never entered your mind or put - to tell you what to do if you were taken prisoner. After all I don’t know why they didn’t but they didn’t. They did things a lot different then, than they do now. Now you’re briefed and everything when you go out, you’re briefed and you know what to do - to expect. This way you don’t know - I never knew what was happening. I knew I had a first time I realized it was when I looked back and I saw the Germans behind me, Germans - so that’s the first that I knew that we were in danger actually.

INT: What kind of treatment did - what kind of treatment did you receive at the time of your capture?

MD: Well, the treatment wasn’t bad, the treatment wasn’t bad. I think they were surprised as much as we were probably. I don’t think that this outfit that took me - I don’t think that the attack may - I don’t that they realized that what they were happening. The interview that night - that night was when I run into people and knew what was going on. That was the German high officers was interviewing us - they knew what was going on. They were after information, that’s what they were after. Because they were getting - about that time I was in the Argonne and that was a big battle going on.

INT: Did they take you individually and interrogate you? I mean did they take you into a room and –

MD: No they – mostly they never did that until that night after I was taken by a prisoner during the day, that was the only time that they quizzed me.

INT: And did you answer with all the questions?

MD: Well, they asked you they had a way - I look at it like all the times that how it happened and everything and I really felt proud of myself, I handled it very good. I felt that way - I felt that way today, I felt that way five years after that I handled myself in pretty good shape.

INT: So were you just cooperative? Is that why you’re proud over the way you handled it?

MD: Well, they had began to quiz me and I, well I say you know more about the war than I do. I told the German captain - I said you know more about the war than I do. I’m a buck private in this men’s army. And after all, you know more about the war. I said I can’t tell you anything about it, you know more about it than I do. After all if I knew too much about it I wouldn’t have been captured.

INT: Was there a communication problem between the two of you? He spoke English to you?

MD: Yes, English, mostly English. Because I never spoke a word of German so actually it was all - their interview was in English, it had to be. After all them people are - they know all about what’s going on by different languages and stuff. No, I’ve said like at the start, I said why quiz me you know more about it more than I know. Which was true, it was true but they still wanted. I look back sometimes how did I - I remember those - I really have been - in the later years I’ve been really proud of myself, how I handled myself as well over the end. Because after all I was only 18 years old, just a punk kid. So I had a long run on the way, I turned it down, I analyzed it on my mind and I think I did a pretty good job. I felt proud after - maybe it was, maybe five, ten years that I began to analyze it. Yes, I felt proud of myself, of handling it after all I didn’t have a chance not do it, I didn’t have a chance when I was taken prisoner. I did not have a chance because shoot when I was behind those enemy lines it’s quite a long way left up when those American troops pulled back to establish new line they left - some of us up there. I don’t know, but I was one of them, I know that. They left us out there.

INT: So they just left you there?

MD: In other words, they couldn’t get everybody back - when you take an army is retreating - they were retreating, they were falling back to establish a new line to be in a better shape to withstand a counterattack which was coming. They knew darn well they were coming. In other words, there’s never advance that doesn’t more or less followed up by a counterattack. In other words once it’s being attacked at, we’ll build up counterattack sometime. That’s a standard procedure, I think. I don’t know, I’m not an army specialist or anything but I know that’s what it turns out to be.

INT: Did the captors - the people that captured you, did they keep any records or information about you?

MD: They do they knew - they began asking me questions and I told them as I said you know more about the war than I know about it. I said that - I said after all you know more about the war than I do, I said I was nothing but a buck private you know more about - you have all the records - in other words they knew what outfit I belonged to, what name and what number and everything, they knew. We had the same kind of deals too, our side was just as smart as they were, sometimes it’s a little luckier.

**Unit 2 - ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW - SAMUEL J. FARROW**

**Samuel J. Farrow, Korean War**

(INT—Interviewer, SF—Samuel J. Farrow)

INT: What was the first thought that ran through your mind when you knew that that was the moment when you were going to become a prisoner? Do you remember anything in particular?

SF: Well, yes, because I still had a hand grenade with me. My weapon - I’d got rid of it - say about a day before then, because I was out of ammunition, but I did have a grenade with me. We had ran across a couple Black prisoners that they had tried to take the skin off, and I wasn’t gonna be. I wasn’t gonna be taken, captured alive. But it didn’t turn out that way. And when this group did catch us, the one that we did walk into, we thought we’s in pretty good terrain, as we was in a ravine. I guess it was about six Chinese guys, we first thought it was Korean that came out. They had a machine gun, and we had, two guys had a carbine, one guy had a .45. There was four of us, and I guess about six of them. Come to find out we was in the middle of one of their CP camps. And the sergeant that was with us said, well we don’t have a chance against the brake [?] guns, because one of the guys did load his carbine. He was getting ready to cut loose, but a carbine against an automatic weapon is no good, not when you’re within 25 yards of each other. Because that’s to say we was in this ravine when they walked out, and I knew I couldn’t use my hand grenade then, ‘cause I had more peoples with me. And believe it or not, I kept that hand grenade for about two days before they actually found it. ‘Cause we thought they didn’t search us as good as they should have when they took us in. Because what they was doing, they was feeling me, mostly, because I was something strange to them. They kept saying “Ethiopee? Ethiopee?” And I kept saying, “No. American Negro, American Negro.” ‘Cause back then, that’s what it was. It wasn’t you know, Black. It was American Negro. And that was it. They took us to this hut, and I come to find out they had more POWs in there that had been watching us for quite a while.

INT: What, as a POW, what was your greatest fear?

SF: Well, I don’t know, because so many thoughts was going through my mind. Well, for some reason, we knew we wasn’t gonna be shot. I don’t know what but that - torture, yes - I was the only Black on in this group when I did get captured. The only thing I was worried about was they going to try to skin me like some of those guys that we had found. After about a week or so, that and just moving us every night. That was about the only actual fear that I had then. I guess I could have been more, but you know, it’s been a long time ago now.

**Unit 2 - ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW - JOHN McCAIN**

**John McCain, Vietnam War**

(INT—Interviewer, JM—John McCain)

INT: Just for the record, I need your name and when you were captured in Hanoi.

JM: My name is John McCain. I’m now the senator from the state of Arizona. I was a Lieutenant Commander of the United States Navy in October 26 1967 when I was shot down. I was released on March 17th 1973.

INT: You were shot down over a body of water if you can tell me about that?

JM: I was part of the first strike inside Hanoi and we were striking a thermal power plant and as I rolled into my dive, I saw a number of surface-to-air missiles headed in my direction, but I wasn’t sure which one was aimed at me. There was a lot in the air that day. In fact, we lost three airplanes that day from that strike. As I released my bombs and started to pull out, a surface-to-air missile took the wing off my airplane. My plane gyrated violently. I ejected, and so I was later told by the Vietnamese, my chute opened just as my feet hit the water. I was knocked unconscious on ejection and broke both my arms because of the flailing— because of the way that the airplane was going so rapidly and twisting. I woke up when I hit the water—it woke me up. I went to the bottom of this lake which was rather muddy and then pushed myself to the top and then found out much to my dismay that I couldn’t pull the toggles with my hands, so I got my teeth around the toggle and inflated my life vest. As I did so, Vietnamese swam out, pulled me in and the natives were quite restless. Understandably since we just finished bombing the place, and a group of them came around and struck me with rifles and bayoneted me and were pretty rowdy. And then the army guys came up and put me in a truck and took me for a very short ride to what we know of as the Hanoi Hilton which they called Hoa Lo Prison.

INT: Did you ever think you could become a POW?

JM: No. I think most Navy pilots figure that there is no such thing as a silver bullet. And although I was trained to the point where I knew exactly what to do when I was hit, no I certainly never thought that I would get shot down.

INT: What did you think when you were put in that truck?

JM: Well I was injured very badly and my knee had also been broken and when I -- and my shoulder was broken by a rifle butt by one of the Vietnamese who slammed a rifle butt down on my shoulder -- and I was put into a cell and on a cot. I was taken out on several occasions and they said if you’ll give us military information then we will give you medical treatment. But if you don’t, then we won’t. On the fourth or fifth day, a guard came in. I was laying in a stretcher on a floor of a cell, and I had a blanket over me. A guard came in and pulled up a blanket and looked at my leg and was with another guy. I saw that my leg had swollen up very badly and the blood had pooled in my knee and so I asked him to, I said get the guard, I mean the doctor and if you’ll take me to the hospital, I said if you’ll take me to the hospital then maybe I can give you military information -- figuring that I could maybe play for time that way. They brought in a guard that we later, known as Zorba, who came in and the doctor didn’t speak English, and he looked at me and took my pulse and he shook his head and the guard, the interrogator who was in there with the guard and with the doctor said, “It’s too late; it’s too late.” And they left. And I was a bit depressed and about some time later the door opened and the interrogator came back in, and he said your father is a big admiral and I said, “Yes, my father is an admiral.” They had really gotten the wire stories my father was an admiral in the Navy so they decided that I was of some significant value to them. They took me to a hospital which was a dirty, filthy room filled with water. It was monsoon season then. They did give me blood, and they operated on my knee and cut all ligaments and cartilages but they did give me blood and that probably saved my life. But my health didn’t improve, and it seemed to get worse. Finally one of the interrogators came and when I’d said the doctors say you are not getting any better, I said, I need to be with Americans. The guard that I had by the way used to eat all my food -- that was one reason why I wasn’t getting any better. So that night they came and put me in a truck and took me to a cell, and there were two Americans there. One of them was Colonel “Bud” Day who was later a Congressional Medal of Honor winner, and Norris Overly, who was also a major at that time. Both of them took very good care of me. They cleaned me. They washed me, and they helped me. Eventually my health improved and they brought in crutches so that I could walk again. And then the Vietnamese, as soon as I was able to walk, then took Bud Day out, and I was alone for about the next three and a half years.

**Unit 2 - ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW - JAMES STOCKDALE**

**James Stockdale, Vietnam War**

(INT—Interviewer, JS—James Stockdale)

INT: When were you captured? Where were you captured? How long were you held? And how many prisons were you in?

JS: Well, I was shot down on the 9th of September, 1965. I was a wing commander, I was nearly 42, I was just on the verge of becoming 42 and I had -- I had been doing a lot of flying, and I was very tired I remember. And it was -- it was daylight flight. But I was shot down going about 500 knots at treetop level. I -- the gun, suddenly I heard it before I saw it, a big 57 millimeter and I turned -- it was right over here and I didn’t expect it because I’d been on this target a lot and they didn’t have big guns there. It had come in -- it was on wheels and it had come in the night before. And I only had about 30 seconds in the parachute because I had to get out of there fast. The fire -- I lost control and the fire warning lights were on and so I ejected, something seemed a little bit odd. It was that I hadn’t had time to -- I couldn’t reach the -- navy to eject and navy system is to pull a curtain down in front of your face but the forces in the airplane were such that I couldn’t get my arms up so I had an holding [?] handle here. And I just pulled at and it took a while for me to realize that I had been in flail, because I’m coming out of, you know, it’s just like falling off the tower and landing on your belly in the swimming pool because you’re going from -- that air’s hard if it’s going 600 knots. And I -- I had the feeling that something was a little wrong with that ejection but I couldn’t put my finger on it. I’m coasting over these trees, I can already see where I’m going to land, it’s in the town up there. And the -- then it was about noon time and this little town all the people were out to see -- to see the crash and all that. And then they started shooting at me and I could hear -- hear the rifle shots and then see the holes in my parachute up above me. But that went on for 10 seconds, but I’m getting near the ground and I finally snag a tree and I -- right on main street. And I flip out my release fastenings here and just as I see -- I had been tracking this -- the town roughnecks were coming down the street, about 15 of them. And they hit me just like a brick wall and -- and then I’m being pummeled and tossed and scratched and -- until finally it -- and it was probably only three minutes but the police whistle blew and that meant somebody was starting, getting orders started. And they put me -- they cut off my clothes and then they -- nobody spoke English or -- and then they said take your boots off and then I -- I was seated, but then I saw this leg and it was way out here and I -- I said, “Oh my God,” and somehow I knew that I was -- that I would have that the rest of my life, and I still have it. But the -- then they carried me away and put me in the grass, this was a country town, and there was no -- nobody talked to me. And for some reason, soon after I got there I kind of passed out and I was awakened it was in the evening and they were preparing to lug me -- literally lug me to the trees up to a road where I got on a truck convoy and so forth. So that was the shoot down event. I could hear my -- I could hear my airplanes buzzing the town when I was reclining but it was -- it was -- we were under trees. So I thought of -- I thought of them and there wasn’t anything they could do. And so that’s the shoot down sequence. It took me about three days to get to prison. That night -- this is instructive about the conditions over there. They put me on this -- it was -- it was -- it was dark and they -- but they had the lights in this trucks, it were -- in this chain of trucks that were heading south full of material that they’d taken off the ships in Hai Phong. And it was kind of a -- but the mood -- and there were a lot of people there because they had to do a lot of lifting. The mood was kind of like a hay ride mood, they were kind of singing and they would go along slowly but somehow they would know when a plane was coming over because I used to -- I’d been out there the night before, we call it road (wrecking), you’re looking for these truck convoys so you can bomb them. But they -- when I saw how clever they were, and they had this information -- I don’t know whether it was coming from radar or what, but they would move over under trees and then they would -- they’d all go out and they’d get about a hundred yards -- maybe that’s too far, 50 yards back in the woods because there was a lot of explosives in those trucks. And I was on top, and they’d get me down and they’d take me over there and then they’d bring me back but I was -- my limbs were getting -- I mean it was pain, you know, painful. I -- not only did I have the broken leg but I can’t raise this arm because that -- when I neglected to hold my wrist, it broke a bone in my back when I swirled. So I was pretty stove up [?]. And so I said, “No.” Somehow I said, “No, leave me on the truck. I’d rather risk the bombs than go through that again.” And finally they got the idea and they would leave me on the truck, but -- they stopped about midnight and there were a couple of civilians there to pick me up -- not to pick me up but to lug me up a little hill into a little shed. I didn’t catch -- get a good look at them but one was a great, big man, he was too big for a Vietnamese, I never saw a Vietnamese that big but these were not -- they were not giving me any trouble. They took me into this little house and they laid me on this flat place, and everything -- there was no -- they were waiting for a jeep, that’s what they were waiting for. A jeep was -- to put me in it. They were waiting for a jeep when suddenly a man -- I’d call him a crazed man burst in the door. And he was heading for me, and they both arose and they knocked him down and pushed him out. About -- sometime later, he hit the door again but this time he had a pistol and I was lying there and he was -- he was firing point blank but one -- one of the civilians knocked him off balance and all that happened was that it creased my leg here, but there was blood on my leg. But you see, he -- that’s the first thing you run into in a place like Vietnam, are the civilians who have been coached by the propaganda and all to kill the aggressor. And there were a lot of Americans that were killed by civilians before they got to prison, we were always talking about where -- why we have -- what happened to the rest of the people? And my answer is probably killed by civilians. If the army is there, then -- they’re not going to treat you nicely but they’re going to -- their orders are to bring you in alive. We didn’t know that but I mean but these -- but they gave everybody rifles and they said to shoot at the airplanes, it’s just a morale building. But anyway this is -- now that isn’t to say that everybody that was around me on my trip in was hostile. I’ll take you up the road and we can cross the big bridge, the Fanwell [?] Bridge which I’d bombed many times and then about daylight we’re coming in to a little town -- well, a fairly good-sized town called Sanwa [?], I didn’t know that until I put the story together later. But I was in the back on this Jeep and my leg was -- there was no room for it and there are three men upfront and they were totally indifferent to my condition and I was in -- I was really wailing and crying back there because the leg was starting to come alive and so anyway they -- we stopped in front of this kind of a concrete building that would be a poor man’s motel I guess, there were several cells like that but they took me in and again, cement white walls and they laid me on this bed and it was just becoming daylight. And then a whole parade of guys came in led by a little man in surgical attire. I mean he had his mask on and everything. He was the doctor, and then the other people were just onlookers and he said -- and he came over and he lifted my eyelids and did what doctors do and then he went back over to a table set, his toolkit down and then he started bringing out things, saws, big knives, I said, “Oh no, no, no, don’t cut it off.” Well I didn’t know what was going to happen but then he came over with a big -- with a needle with this clear fluid and he put it right in here, it was a lot of fluid. And I’ll tell you this was dawn, it was dark when I woke up. I mean there must have been enough in that needle to kill a horse but first thing I did was I looked down there to see if I had one or two legs because I didn’t know when I went -- and I had two and I was in a big plaster cast. He’d put me in a travelling cast and I also had plaster upper body because of this shoulder problem. So that was the -- that’s all he tried to do when he looked me over. It was just getting -- so he can get in -- so I was in the truck. Next we went on -- and there I was picked up by an old kind of a scruffy couple that were driving a truck with a box truck in the back. I mean a ton and half truck I guess you would call it. And they were -- I was helpless -- with all this plaster of Paris I was -- so they’d drive the truck slowly through country roads and occasionally stop and come back and see if I was all right. But –

INT: You didn’t rip that off, right? You took your cast off?

JS: Yes, I did that night because I -- they kept -- they were -- you read that, they had -- they were creeping along and I could hear fog horns. It reminded me of Newport, Rhode Island at night. And it was an eerie night. And I’d spent a lot of time in my navy years in Hong Kong. And I had made friends with a couple of British plainclothes policemen there, that lived in Hong Kong and they were detectives. And they would tell me about their work. And a lot of it dealt with the smuggling of people out of China into Hong Kong. But he -- I remember they said, they’d come out in these sampans, the people do this for money. They get so much money to bring people out. But as a precaution they have false bottoms and they have, they have lead weights on their passengers. And if they get in a pinch they can pull a lever and the evidence disappears to the bottom of the bay. So I thought by God if this -- maybe somebody’s gotten -- maybe the country is trying to buy me out of here, but as I sat there waiting for this old couple to go out and do whatever they were looking for in the dark, I had -- I tore that up the body cast off because I had to have some control over -- I had to swim -- I mean I had to be able to swim with one arm. But the funny thing was when they came back and she looked at all this debris she didn’t -- you’d think she would be enraged but she wasn’t. She was just indifferent to it. The next morning we got into Hanoi and I was parked in front of the Hoa Lo prison there. The only time I ever saw that street, I never for the next seven and half years ever was on the street without being blindfolded. I didn’t realize that I had been memorizing a lot of things here but then they brought a stretcher out, took me into prison and there I was, but that’s kind of a long, elaborate talk about those first days, but that -- and I was about the 26th man to get shot down, you see.

**Unit 2 - ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW - ROBERT WINDHAM**

**Robert Windham, World War II**

(INT—Interviewer, RW—Robert Windham)

INT: How long was it from your landing until your capture?

RW: From the landing the 14th (D+8) our capture came on January the19th, 1945.

INT: Tell me the event that led up to your capture.

RW: We had fought with General Patton’s army until about the 7th of September. We were transferred to General Patch’s army. We had to turn around and come out of Belgium and back into France and join the 7th Army and fought right on across France to the northeast corner of France. In fact right in the corner where the old Maginot Line was located in World War I. That’s where we took a little beating there when we crossed the Mosel River which runs into the Rhine River. We got kicked back across that Mosel River and lost a lot of our people and our vehicles and everything else, guns and what have you. We set up a defense along that and we set there for about eight days. Then we were attack before we got outfitted again by a German Army including a lot of tanks, etc. That’s what happened on the night of the 29th. That’s the position and condition we were in when the Germans hit us about seven o’clock on January the 19th of 1945. (error of dates is the speaker’s).

INT: About how long until you realized that things were not too good?

RW: It took about 10 or 15 minutes because in that interim period I had a runner come from Headquarters from my Captain the company commander. He said that the Captain hadn’t been able to get you on the telephone. I said I had been trying to get headquarters. Not with any knowledge at that time of what was going on at that particular moment, no. I knew I was out of contact with him because I had tried my radio on my jeep and couldn’t raise anybody at the headquarters. The runner came to me telling me about this and I said, “Yeah, I realize that.” On the way back to headquarters to let the captain know that I was out of contact with everybody. I was not the only one in that boat, I found this out later of course, nobody had any communication with anybody. Before he got back to the CP, command post, an artillery shell hit him and he was picked up the medics and of course he didn’t make it out without medics because they already surrounded too. They were there with us. He came through it okay with a very bad shoulder. The point was he didn’t get back to the company commander to tell him. I’m sure by them and talking to the company commander later none of the platoons in H Company, the heavy weapons company, had any communications with him. Finally in the analysis in talking to the battalion commander who was captured with all of his staff, after being in a prisoner of war camp later I was able to find out that he indeed was out of communication with the regimental commander who was up near the front lines with his other two battalions. That was what happened that night and it took place so quick, flabbergasted, that’s about the state we were in when we saw those tanks coming down the hedge row between us, the German tiger with the 88s. Then we began to wonder what was going on. Things began to develop here in my brain. There’s something wrong here. It was too late then. We did what we could with the tanks. Knocked the first one out. Based upon what I have previously mentioned we were pretty well beat up at the time. We had one bazooka round left. My bazooka man is the one who came to me and said he wanted to find out who this tank is. I stuck my head through the hedge row and I about could have brushed my teeth on the end of that 88 almost. So we slipped down the hedge row and he fired that bazooka round in the tank. Set fire and it exploded and fire was all over the place. Then when it kind of cooled down, we were trying to stay out of the way of any explosive devices we cuddled up against the hedge row. When it kind of quieted down and the blaze let up a little bit I peeked over the hedge row and there was another tank about 30 yards away. Same type. But peeking out around the back of that tank was German soldiers, there was none in front. There was none with the front tank. I assumed he was more a recon and if he did get burned up we would have some soldiers behind them to mop it up. We slipped down the hedge row and I always had a grenade on my belt. I didn’t know what I was going to do except I had that grenade. The tank commander made a very serious error. He raised his hatch a little bit and I jumped up on the tank and dumped a grenade into it. I knew I didn’t have much time so I jumped down onto the hedge row . It is night time and the snow is 14 inches deep. I rolled into that snow and the grenade went off and it set the tank afire. I could see the blaze and I knew that it was burning. I hit the snow and lost my helmet. I fumbled around for it as a soldier does not like to be without his helmet. Just about that time I heard a noise like something dropped in the snow. It was a grenade that had been thrown and I didn’t have much time as it exploded and it almost blew me away. It was a concussion grenade as if it had been a fragmentation grenade I would have been fragged. When it went off I lost memory again. I tried to shake off the concussion when I felt something touch the back of my neck. It was a bayonet and behind this bayonet was a German soldier. He said “raus” which I didn’t understand but I learned quickly as he pressed the bayonet intro my neck. I guess I was floored. He took me to the other side of the hedge row and he took me back to a big tall German sergeant who looked like he was a giant. He was the top NCO in that battalion which was part of a paratrooper battalion. He lined up the four men, one of which was mine, and said, “I am going to send you back to battalion headquarters.” He said, “You fly, we shoot.” That might of been the only German he knew (meant English) but I got the message. You try to run away and I will shoot you down.

INT: What was the date you were captured.

RW: It was on the 19th of January 1945.

INT: And how old were you?

RW: I was 24.

INT: What was going thru your mind at the time of your capture?

RW: I have reviewed this throughout my lifetime and I find it difficult to come up with an answer. I was not frightened. The first thing that occurred was: how did I ever get into this mess? That was about it as events took place rather rapidly because within two or three minutes I was standing with the German sergeant telling me not to take off. Very quickly there was some other people joined us from the rifle companies. Of course I didn’t know those people and I didn’t know who they were and where they were from. I found out later.

INT: How were you transported to prison camps?

RW: As we waited there for a few moments they moved us back a little further back each time. By the time we got back to the German command post we had picked up 50 to 60 people. We went in there with 20 people with three German guards.

INT: When captured did they search you?

RW: They did not. They took our weapons, naturally. Their sergeant said to take these people back so they really didn’t have time while on the road. When we got there other people were also there. They put us behind the group that was already there. One of the things they do is to try and find the officers. They went down the line flipping up collars. General Patton wanted all of his officers to show their insignia on collar and helmet. Once we left General Patton’s army we made some changes in General Patches army. In General Patches army we hid our helmet insignia with chewing gum and put our collar insignia under our collars. The man searching came down the line and he flipped up my collar. He said, “offizier.” The command came from the front, “Macht schnell,” and I couldn’t understand the rest of it. He marched me up and they told me to wait right there. It wasn’t long before I was taken into a little building they had there to meet my first interviewer. He was a German captain who was the battalion S-2 intelligence. He was the first German I talked to.

INT: What was the conversation like?

RW: He was sitting on one side of a little table with a chair sitting in front of him and a guard on each side. When I sat down I am sorry to say I was a smoker at the time and I had my cigarettes in my jacket pocket and he could see their outline. The first question he asked me was, “Do you have cigarettes?” and I said, “Yes.” He tried to get me in a spot where I would be answering questions. I gingerly took out my cigarettes and laid them in front of him. He took out one, lit it and then turned back to me and says, “Would you like a cigarette, Lieutenant?” At that point, I was not in the mood for anything except to get away from there and have a chance to escape later on. He asked me the standard questions, name, rank and serial number and date of birth and that’s all you are going to give him. All you better give him. So I gave that to him. He said, “Oh that kind of an answer.” I said, “Yes, sir.” Then he kept on asking questions for a few minutes. Just tell me this, just tell me that, company, size, the commander, what rank, all that kind of stuff. Trying to get me to break down. Finally he said, “I’m not getting anywhere there with you.” I said, “Yes sir.” He still had my cigarettes and he asked me if I wanted one just before I got out of the chair. I said, “No, thank you.” He stuck them back in his pocket. From there when I got up from the table, he began to see the blood spots on the front of my jacket. I guess I was a little surprised but at that stage they didn’t have a lot of time to dwell on this kind of thing. I was astonished when he said to me, “You’re wounded.” I said, “Yes. How bad?” “I don’t know.” Without further ado he called for his battalion surgeon who was right outside. He came in with his little black case and he told me to come with him. We went outside, the S2 wanted to get on with his debriefing and he wanted to get me out of the way. I went out the door with the battalion surgeon under an oak tree. He asked me to stand up against the tree. He laid his black bag down on the ground. He stooped down and fumbled around in there. When he got up he started moving around and he began to pace back and forth in front of me. I didn’t know what was going on. He suddenly stopped his pacing and with his hands behind him he turned, looked me right in the face and said, “Well the best thing I can do with you is shoot you.” That is just what he did. He whipped out his needle from behind his back and gave me a shot in my left arm. By that time I was ready to melt down. I thought that was the end. Frightened out of my shoes almost. I didn’t do anything, I didn’t let on. I felt like a bucket of water had been poured in the side of that tree. He said, “That scare you?” I said, “You’re doggone it did.” He laughed. I found that amazing that type of thing that close to the front lines. I didn’t picture the Germans that way, hardnosed, fighters with a frown on their face.

INT: How long did you remain there?

RW: When I walked in the command post that night I saw an American officer coming up. When he came out I recognized it was my company commander. He shook his head at me. I deducted from that that number one you don’t say anything. Number two, don’t let on that you know me. I didn’t even look at him them and I knew to keep my mouth shut. They put my Captain and myself in a command car that night. They brought us back to their division headquarters, which was several miles away. I don’t remember how long it took us. It was a two rut road in that area. It was still night time. Somewhere around one or two o’clock in the morning. I was taken down in the basement of the two or three story building where Command Headquarters were located back in the woods. I was separated from him that night, didn’t get to talk to him in the car. The guard said no talking. We got there and put me in the basement and I don’t know where they put Captain Colter. I didn’t see him again for about a month and a half. I stayed down there almost seven and a half days. They had no guard on me except the German communications operator. He was the only one in the basement. He was in the corner and I was lying on the hay over here. Of course he had a weapon.

INT: Any further interrogation?

RW: Yes, there was. I think it was the third day. I was surprised at staying there so long. Anyway, apparently they were interrogating the company commander. I suspect he was giving them a hard time. Maybe it took a couple of days to get anything out of him. Then when they shipped him out they called me up there. A big German sergeant, one of those paratrooper type of people, he marched me upstairs and set me down at a table. In that room there was nothing but that table and two chairs. He was back in one of the corners behind me when a German Captain came in. The captain came in with a hand full of papers. He spoke very nicely to me, “Good morning, Lt. Windham.” I knew he what he was trying to do as we had been briefed a little bit. I responded with a “good morning.” He pulled up his chair and he began to ask questions, of course. This man was G-2 not S-2 and he was at division level. He was the representative of the German army outfit, which ever it was. INT: How did the routines differ?

RW: Well it got hot and heavy. The reason for it was because when he entered he dumped a whole bunch of papers on the table. He began to shuffle thru them and pull one or two out and began to ask me questions from notes that he had already made. He started out and I gave him name, rank and serial number. I told him right out, I said that the Geneva Convention only calls for what I have given you. It didn’t phase him at all and he asked all kinds of questions. Odd little questions even to the point of asking how I reacted in social gatherings. I had a hard time believing that he asked that but it was something to get you on the positive side rather than the negative side. In a period of time (40-50 minutes), he started to ask me about the tactical situation and the capture. I repeated my name, rank, serial number and he got angry real fast and he jumped up and slammed his chair down. He said, “Windham, you don’t have to tell me anything as I have your history all stacked up here. If you don’t believe it, let me show you.” I didn’t say a word of course. I mentioned that the room was empty but in the corner they had stacked up what looked to be some kind of records. He went over there for a minute and shuffled around and came back with a folder with my name on it. An old manila folder and threw that down beside me rather than pass it and said, “Take a look at that.” For the next few hours, I was shaking all over from what I was reading in that folder. I began to read from the front, of course, and the further I went the shakier I got about the information that man had. The Germans had what I considered a real fine intelligence service.

INT: What kind of material was in the file?

RW: Well I took it out and they had a copy of my 201 file (what I had done in the past) the places I had been, the routine I had lived in training and that was just the beginning. When I got thru about three hours later in looking thru that thing and reading just about every word of it I was quaking in my boots. They had every thing in there imaginable. They knew when I finished OCS at Ft. Benning, They knew my assignments and they could trace my assignment from the day I entered until the day I was captured. It was all in there, many different things. He thought that if I was angry enough I might say something but it was too late then. I was so concerned by this point because they knew all my people back home, they knew where my wife was living, they knew my sons birthday. They knew all about my family, my wife’s family with one very small exception. They did not know my grandmother’s first name. Mr. & Mrs. Van F. Kelp(?) and they couldn’t find it because of me.

INT: Did they make any threats that this would happen if you do not tell us more?

RW: He came back in, he took his place and he had all these materials and he said, “Well I see that you have looked through all these things and do you have anything to say?” I said, “Yes, pretty thoroughly.” He said, “You got anything to say?” I said, “No, I don’t.” He said, “You are not going to say anything?” He said, “Just tell me what company you was in.” I knew what the deal was behind that. If I answered one he would expect another. I said, “I have no comment as you know what the rules are as well as I do. Name, rank, serial number.” I repeated it. Again his anger showed and he got up and shoved his chair under the table and left and I never saw him again. If you let it go for just one small thing, a small thing that they didn’t have.

**INTERVIEW ANALYSIS GUIDE**

Name of the interviewee/POW: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

In which war did the POW serve? Where did the capture take place?

List three things in the interview you view as historically important.

a)

b)

c)

Write two questions you would ask the POW that were not asked by the interviewer.

a)

b)

What did you find most interesting about the interview?

What new insight did the interview give you into the POW experience?

**WRITTEN DOCUMENT ANALYSIS GUIDE**

1. Identify the type of document:

2. Identify any unique characteristics of the document.

3. Date(s) of the document:

4. Author (or creator) of the document:

5. For what audience was the document written?

6. List three things the author said that you think are important.

a)

b)

c)

7. Why do you think this document was written?

8. What evidence in the document helps you know why it was written? Quote from the

document.

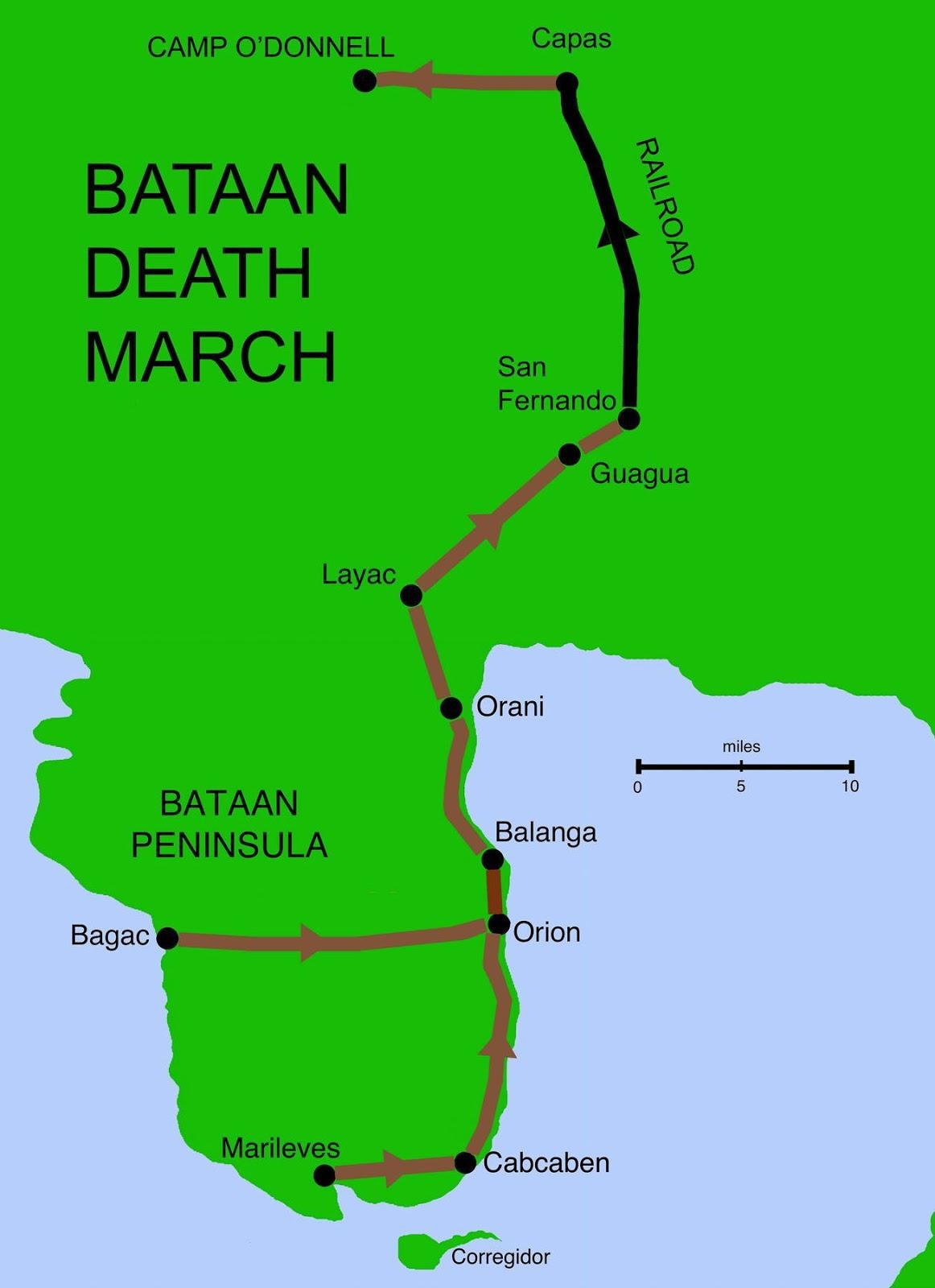
9. Write a question to the author that is left unanswered by the document.

**VICTORY FROM WITHIN**

Bataan Death March Map

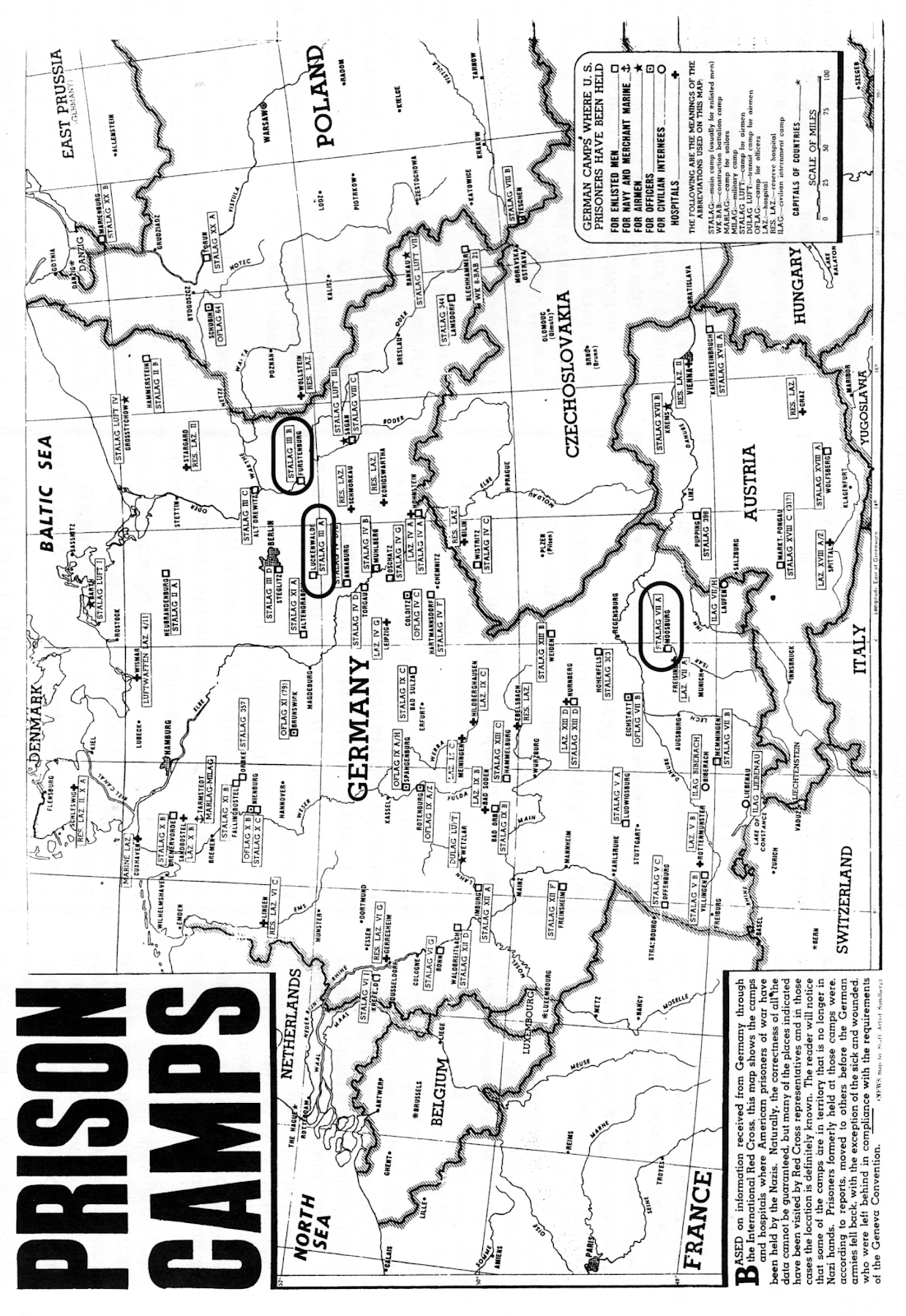
The Bataan Death March occurred in1942. The Imperial Japanese Army forcibly transferred 60,000

Filipino and 15,000 American prisoners of war after the three-month Battle of Bataan in the Philippines during World War II. Approximately 2,500–10,000 Filipino and 300–650 American prisoners of war died before they reached Camp O'Donnell. The 80-mile march was characterized by wide-ranging physical abuse and murder resulting in very high fatalities inflicted upon prisoners and civilians alike by the Japanese Army. It was later judged by an Allied military commission to be a Japanese war crime.



**MAP OF THE PHILIPINE ISLANDS**



**World War II German POW Camps**

**Prisoners of War in American History: A Synopsis** 

Freedom has not come free. No one can attest to this better than the men and women who have served in the military of this great nation we call the United States of America. No one knows better what it is like to have that freedom suddenly snatched away than those individuals who, in the process of serving their country, have found themselves prisoners of war. It is an experience neither asked for nor desired. Most Americans who have been prisoners of war are ordinary people who have been placed in extraordinary circumstances by no planning of their own. Americans have been held captive as prisoners of war during many wars and in many places. Still, there is a common bond that is shared by all. Their story is an inspiring chapter of our history as a nation.

*The men and women of this country who have been forced by circumstances to become prisoners of war truly know the meaning of freedom. They know it has not come free. Their story is one of sacrifice and courage; their legacy, the gift of liberty.*

**Revolutionary War**

During the Revolutionary War, an estimated 20,000 Americans were held as prisoners of war and 8,500 died in captivity. Some were subsequently released as part of an exchange system between America and Great Britain. Many, however, were not that fortunate. Some were kept in British jails, but for many, life as a prisoner of war was spent in the damp, musty holds of vessels. These prison ships were anchored in Wallabout Bay (New York), Charleston Harbor (South Carolina) and St. Lucia (West Indies). For those who died, their bodies were tossed overboard, or taken ashore and buried in shallow graves. After the Revolution, although America was no longer at war, many American sailors became captives at the hands of the “Barbary pirates” of North Africa and were used as slave labor until ransomed.

**War of 1812**

Renewed hostilities with Great Britain in 1812 meant war and, consequently, prisoners of war. Initially, American POWs were once again kept in prison ships until 1813, when they were taken to England and held in prisons, such as the infamous Dartmoor. The stone walls of Dartmoor, located in Devonshire, enclosed 400 barracks and, according to prisoner of war Charles Andrews, “death itself, with hopes of a hereafter, seemed less terrible than this gloomy prison.” In 1815, more than 5,000 prisoners of war left Dartmoor. At least 252 did not return to America, casualties of the hated prison. One of the most celebrated arts of this war was the composition of *The Star Spangled Banner*. Francis Scott Key was aboard a British vessel in Baltimore harbor attempting to win the release of a prisoner of war when he penned the famous words. America’s national anthem is the only one in the world written by a prisoner of war. The American prisoner of war story dates to the Revolutionary War when colonists fighting for independence were held by the British.

**Civil War**

During the Civil War, an estimated 194,000 Union soldiers and 214,000 Confederate soldiers became prisoners of war, more than in any other conflict in the history of the country. Approximately 30,000 Union soldiers died in Confederate prisons while the death rate was almost as bad in the North with approximately 26,000 Confederate soldiers dying in Union prisoner of war camps. Since both sides predicted a short war, neither prepared for large numbers of POWs during the four years of conflict. As prisoners were taken, commanders usually worked out exchanges among themselves. Soon an exchange system was accepted by both governments, but failed to work due to a variety of disagreements that arose. The number of prisoners of war increased and prison facilities on both sides became severely overcrowded. Mismanagement, lack of adequate planning, retaliation and many other factors led to suffering by prisoners on each side. By the end of the war, camps such as Andersonville suffered from a lack of supplies and experienced extremely high mortality rates, as well as death and desertion by many of its guards. During the 14 months of its existence, Andersonville accounted for 43 percent of all Union deaths during the Civil War. At 29 percent, this death rate was only a little higher than the 24 percent death rate experienced by Confederate soldiers at Elmira Prison in New York.

**Spanish-American War**

The Spanish-American War only lasted for three months and less than a dozen Americans became prisoners of war. These POWs were exchanged in about six weeks. By contrast, United States soldiers captured approximately 150,000 prisoners held in Camp Sumter (Andersonville), where nearly 13,000 Union soldiers died during the 14-month operation of the prison during the Civil War.

**World War I**

During U.S. involvement in World War I (1917 and 1918), approximately 4,120 Americans were held as prisoners of war and there were 147 confirmed deaths. Rules for the fair treatment of POWs had been set in place some years earlier. Still each prisoner of war had to face days without enough to eat or without adequate clothing. There was also the uncertainty of tomorrow and the loss of freedom.

**World War II**

In the largest war of this century–World War II–thousands of Americans were held as prisoners of war. In Europe, nearly 94,000 Americans were interned as POWs. Many of these had been shot down while flying missions over Germany or had fought in the Battle of the Bulge. Conditions for POWs worsened as the war drew to a close. Malnutrition, overcrowding, and lack of medical attention were common. As American and Russian forces closed in from opposite directions, many American POWs were taken from camps and forced to march for weeks as the Germans tried to avoid the Allied Forces. In the Pacific Theater, nearly 30,000 Americans were interned by the Japanese. Most of these men and women were captured after the fall of the Philippines and suffered some of the highest death rates in American history at nearly 40 percent. Prisoners of war suffered a brutal captivity and many were crowded into “hell ships” bound for Japan. Often times, the unmarked ships were torpedoed by submarines. Those POWs who survived internment in the Philippines and the hell ships were forced to work in mines and other locations in Japan. Most worked seven days a week with minimal food. American prisoners in France during World War I make use of outdoor sanitary facilities.

**Korean War**

Treatment of American prisoners of war during the Korean War rivaled that of prisoners in the hands of the Japanese during World War II. American captors did not abide by the Geneva Convention. More than 7,100 Americans were captured and interned and just over 2,700 are known to have died while interned. There were 8,177 Americans classified as missing-in-action (MIA). The United States in February 1954 declared them presumed dead. Life as a POW meant many forced marches in subfreezing weather, solitary confinement, brutal punishments and attempts at political “re-education.” Here prisoners received their first systematic dose of indoctrination techniques by their captors. This was a relatively new phenomenon and resulted in the Code of Conduct that now guides all American servicemen in regards to their capture. Many Americans were the victims of massacres. After an armistice was signed in 1953, a major exchange known as “Operation Big Switch” finally brought Americans home. More than 8,000 Americans are still listed as missing in action in Korea.

**Vietnam War**

During the longest war in American history, the Vietnam War, 766 Americans are known to have been prisoners of war. Of this number, 114 died during captivity. Unlike previous wars, the length of time as a POW was extensive for many, with some being interned for more than seven years. Torture was common and the Geneva Convention was not followed, as the North Vietnamese claimed the Americans were political criminals, not prisoners of war. Americans gave nicknames to many of the prisoner of war camps: Alcatrez, the Hanoi Hilton, Briarpatch, the Zoo and Dogpatch, the latter located only five miles from the Chinese border. After American forces raided one camp, Son Tay, the North Vietnamese moved POWs from the countryside of North Vietnam into Hanoi. American POWs were released and returned home as part of Operation Homecoming in 1973. More than 200 Americans were reported as MIAs. Perhaps more than any other war, Vietnam continues to illustrate the complexity of the POW/ MIA issue.

**Persian Gulf War**

The United States and a coalition of allies declared war on Iraq in 1991. During the one-month conflict, 23 Americans were captured, including two women. American POWs were eventually taken to Baghdad. The Iraqi government declared its intent to use the prisoners of war as human shields to thwart bombing missions over the city. Bombs did partially destroy a building which held the POWs. Threat of torture and actual physical abuse were common. Beatings with pipes and hoses, bursting eardrums with fists and electrical shocks with volts from car batteries were experienced by the prisoners. Fortunately, all 23 of the American POWs returned to the United States.

**U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs - Former American Prisoners of War**

This report is based on original, official battle reports and records on casualties, POWs, and MIAs for WW I, WW II and Korea. Estimates of surviving WW II and Korean Conflict POWs alive at the end of calendar year 2004 are based on estimated male veteran deaths and population by period of service for that year. For POWs of the Vietnam period, counts of surviving POWs alive at the end of 2004 are based as much as possible on records of individuals kept and followed under various auspices. Because the Defense POW/MIA Personnel Office (DPMO) does not officially keep track of the status of ALL repatriated POWs, this report assumes those of periods after Vietnam were alive at the end of 2004.

**Table 1. Summary of All Wars**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Captured and Interned** | **Died while**  **POW** | **Returned to U.S. Military Control** | **Refused to Return** | **Alive at End of 2004** |
| **Grand Total** | **142,246** | **17,009** | **125,214** | **21** | **32,550** |
| **WW 1** | 4,120 | 147 | 3,973 | -- | -- |
| **WW II** | 130,201 | 14,072 | 116,129 | -- | 29,850 (b) |
| **Korea** | 7,140 | 2,701 | 4,418 | 21 (c) | 2,100 (b) |
| **Vietnam** | 725 | 64 | 661 | -- | 587 |
| **Gulf War** | 47 (d) | 25 (d) | 21 (d) | -- | 21 (d) |
| **Somalia** | 1 | -- | 1 | -- | 1 (e) |
| **Kosovo** | 3 | -- | 3 | -- | 3 (e) |
| **Bosnia** | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| **Iraq** | 9 (f) | -- | 8 | -- | 8 (f) |

(a) Number rounded to nearest 50. (b) Number alive at end of 2004 is based on mortality estimates derived from VA Office of Actuary data and rounded to nearest 50. Because of the advanced age of WW I veterans, estimates of those alive at end of 2004 would be too unreliable to report. However, the number might be zero. Estimated death rates in 2004 for “WW II only” and all “Korean War only” male veterans are used to estimate living POWs of WW II and the Korean War, respectively. (c) While initially 21 Korean Conflict POWs refused repatriation, only one remained in China, one died and 19 left China for Western countries. (d) The DPMO lists 47 captives (including Navy Captain Michael Scott Speicher, who is listed as “missing/captured”). Of the 47, 25 are listed as killed in action (the remains of 2 have not been returned because they were in aircraft lost at sea), and 21 were repatriated. The 25 killed in action are listed here as died while POW. Since DOD indicates that it does not officially maintain contact with ALL living POWs, it cannot say for certain how many are still alive. The assumption for this report is that those of this era were still alive at the end of 2004. Captain Speicher is not included in the number alive at the end of 2004, but this in no way is meant to suggest anything about his status. (e) The assumption for this report is that those of this era were alive at the end of 2004. (f) This number in the first column includes Spc. Keith Mathew Maupin, who is listed as “missing/captured.” The number in the last column pertains only to those who were returned to U.S. military control; all are assumed to be alive at the end of 2004. Spc. Maupin is not included in the number, but this in no way is meant to suggest anything about his status.

**U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs - Former American Prisoners of War (cont’d)**

**Table 2. World War II POWs by Status, Branch and Theater (for Army and Air Corps)**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Captured and Interned** | **Died While POW** | **Returned to U.S. Military Control** | **Estimated Alice at End of 2004** |
| **Grand Total** | **130,201** | **14,072** | **116,129** | **29,850** |
| **Army & Air Corps - Total** | **124,079** | **12, 653** | **111,426** | **28,800** |
| European Theatre/Mediterranean (a) | 93,941 | 1,121 | 92,820 | 24,500 (b) |
| Pacific (Other than The Philippines) | 1,885 | 457 | 1,428 | 350 (b) |
| Other Theaters of Operation | 2,673 | 425 | 2,248 | 600 (b) |
| The Philippines (c) (December 7, 1941 through May 10, 1942) | 25,580 | 10,650 | 14,930 | 3,350 (b) |
| **Navy & Marine Corps - Total** | **6,122** | **1,419** | **4,703** | **1,050** |
| Navy (d) | 3,848 | 901 | 2,947 | 650 (b) |
| Marine Corps (e) | 2,274 | 518 | 1,756 | 400 (b) |

(a) Includes 23,554 captured during the Battle of Bulge (Ardennes, December 16, 1944 – January 25, 1945).

(b) The calculation uses an estimated 2004 death rate for male “WW II only” veterans and makes no distinction among WW II branches and theater with respect to death rate. Estimates of survivors are rounded to nearest 50.

(c) Also known as the Bataan-Corregidor combat zone. Data include Filipino Scouts. U.S. Forces captured included approximately 17,000 American nationals and 12,000 Filipino Scouts. During the first year of captivity, a reported 30% of the Americans and 8% of the Filipinos died. Data are unclear as to the number of each group surviving to repatriation, but a very rough estimate would be 11,000 Americans and 4,000 Filipino Scouts. This information is based on military records developed during the war, but no accurate breakdown was made after repatriation. In addition, some 7,300 American civilian men, women, and children were involuntarily incarcerated by the Japanese in 1941– 1942. An additional 13,000 of mixed American and Asian parentage holding American citizenship hid out during this period and were never interned.

(d) Navy casualty data are allocated to naval vessels, not to theater of operations. (e) Marine Corps personnel captured in the Philippines December 1941 – May 1942 totaled 1,388. Data on numbers dying during captivity, repatriated, and still living are not available for The Philippines.

**U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs - Former American Prisoners of War (cont’d)**

**Table 3. KOREAN CONFLICT POWs by Status and Branch**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Captured and Interned** | **Died While POW** | **Returned to U.S. Military Control** | **Refused to Return** | **Estimated Alive at End of 2004 (a)** |
| **Grand Total** | **7,140** | **2,701** | **4,418** | **21** | **2,100** |
| Army | 6,656 | 2,662 | 3,973 | 21 | 1,900 (a) |
| Navy | 35 | 4 | 31 | -- | (b) |
| Marine Corps | 25 | 31 | 194 | -- | 100 (a) |
| Air Force | 224 | 4 | 220 | -- | 100 (a) |

(a) The calculation uses an estimated 2004 death rate for male “Korean Conflict only” veterans and makes no distinction among branches with respect to death rate. Estimates of survivors are rounded to nearest 50.

(b) Less than 25.

**Table 4. VIETNAM POWs/MIAs by Status and Branch**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |  |  | **MIAs** | **MIAs** |
| **Captured and Interned (a)** | **POWs Dying in Capitvity** | **POWs Returned to U.S. Military Control** | **POWs Alive at End of 2004** | **Remains Returned** | **Still MIA (b)** | **Captured and Interned (a)** |
| **Grand Total** | **725** | **64** | **661 (c)** | **587** | **741 (d)** | **1,842** |
| Army | 168 | 29 | 139 | 119 | 125 (d) | 585 |
| Navy | 160 | 9 | 151 | 135 | 155 (d) | 379 |
| Marine Corps | 46 | 8 | 38 | 32 | 66 (d) | 234 |
| Air Force | 351 | 18 | 333 | 301 | 383 (d) | 610 |
| Coast Guard | -- | -- | -- | -- | 1 (d) | 0 |
| Civilians | -- | -- | 65 (c) | -- | 14 (d) | 34 |

(a) Includes “POWs Dying in Captivity” plus “POWs Returned to U.S. Military Control”.

(b) Source: DPMO, Vietnam-Era Unaccounted for Statistical Report, 1-7-05, p.1. At the conclusion of hostilities, League of Families data indicated 2,583 were classified as MIAs (including 48 civilians).

(c) Civilians are not included in grand total for this column. Source of data: www.NAMPOWS.org.

(d) The sum of MIA “Remains Returned” by branch, including civilians, is 3 more than the grand total shown. The source of the branch data is DPMO, U.S. Unaccounted-For from the Vietnam War for each branch, 3-22-05, whereas the source for the total is the DPMO report cited in footnote b above. Klein, Robert, et al. “Former American Prisoners of War.” U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Policy, Planning, and Preparedness. April 2005.

VICTORY FROM WITHIN CAPTURE - Beyond the Statistics

Using the statistics from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs—Former American Prisoners of War document, create an infographic which communicates the data and information on the number of POWs captured during different wars. Create or transfer your infographic below.