

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Pearl Harbor Ni'ihau Incident

Thanks to Dr. Will Dabbs and his factual historical account of little known history immediately following the sneak attack by the once fascist nation of Japan on Sunday morning of December 7, 1941.

The Veterans' Corner
Scott Drummond
USCG Veteran



Ni'ihau being the second smallest of the primary Hawaiian Islands is also the western most of this chain. An Elizabeth Sinclair purchased this island in 1864 for \$10,000. Her great grandchild, Aylmer Robinson took possession of this tiny island and was considered a benevolent landlord to the native population whom he visited from another island and kept check on once a week. Of those 136 native islanders in 1941 there were three with Japanese ancestry, which as it became are key to this tidbit of history. As planned by Japanese military officers they mistakenly detailed Ni'ihau as uninhabited and instructed their bomber pilots to divert to Ni'ihau in case of battle damage to be picked up later by a Japanese submarine on standby.

After the first wave of Japanese fighter planes inflicted catastrophic damage to our naval fleet at Pearl, the second wave launched from offshore, however met our always fine military forces, ready with what little defensive measures were at their avail, including armed civilians, doing their best to defend America. Amongst these attackers was a Japanese petty officer Shigenori Nishikaichi, also an ideological zealot. His target was Wheeler Field where his Zero was shot up to the point that he diverted to Ni'ihau where he crash landed. The islanders came out to see the commotion, and knowing of the strained relationship between America and Japan, they stripped him of his weapons and papers. Being the Japanese zealot that he was, he was furious.

As the islanders learned of the attack from their battery powered radios, they held Shigenori Nishikaichi prisoner and with no military training the four guards they assigned eventually took to sleeping and wandering off. Aylmer also failed to return which would have changed this outcome.

The three Japanese related islanders meanwhile decided to become allies with the downed fighter pilot, retrieved his weapons and turned to firing upon their fellow islanders who took off to the woods and caves, hiding. Ben Kanahale was incensed when Nishikaichi, threatened his wife, Ella and then pulled his Japanese pistol and threatened to kill everyone on the island. Ben a tough and able sheep farmer despite being injured by the Japanese pilot turned on him with fury and was joined by his dearly beloved wife, Ella, and between the both of them savagely beat him to death. Nishikaichi's other part Japanese ally, Yoshio, consumed with fear, then grabbed the now dead fighter pilot's shotgun and disposed of himself.

From this we learn that no nation, no matter how tiny is safe from aggression of those who hate our civilized world and those that our men and women in uniform stand ready to protect, if at all possible. We learn the value of our own Bill of Rights, our Second Amendment, as used by civilians on Pearl Harbor during the attack, and something the islanders of Ni'ihau would have appreciated.

Semper Paratus

Protecting Farms/Homes from Wildfire

Chestatee/Chattahoochee RC&D (CCRCD) is leading the way with Wildfire education and prevention programs such as Firewise, Ready Set Go, and Fire Adapted Communities (FACNET) in Georgia and surrounding states including South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia. Wildfire is frightening when it is out of control and heading for your property. Fire is unforgiving and does not discriminate but destroys anything and everything in its path and can happen in a blink of an eye. All it takes is one spark, match, or errant cigarette to start a fire and change lives forever.

Farms are especially at risk because everything there is flammable and expensive to replace. All it takes around equipment sheds, hay barns, livestock facilities, or farm homes is one spark or an errant cigarette to destroy in a few minutes what has taken generations to build. We should never take for granted that our property is safe and that the destructive fires will always happen to someone else (someone else thought that too). It can happen to our home, hay barn, tractor shed, or chicken houses and just think of the financial disaster.

FACNET is a national wildfire education and preparedness "way-of-life" that CCRCD along with The Georgia Forestry Commission (GFC), local Fire Rescue departments, and US Forest Service (USFS) have worked together to develop a FACNET model here in Towns County. The model is used as a pattern for other communities to use to reduce their risk of wildfire. The purpose of the FAC program is to educate the public and first responders about the dangers of uncontrolled wildfire and to develop emergency survival plans for the eventual wildfire that as the experts say will strike where we live sooner or later and is not a matter of "if, but when"!

A wildfire doesn't have to be a major spectacular event like we see on TV news in California, but a small one that destroys your property is just as tragic to you. TV coverage we see about wildfires in the west shows hundreds of homes destroyed in a matter of hours by a raging wildfire, but what they don't show are the farms and ranches that the fire had to destroy on the way to the subdivisions. Losses due to wildfire on farms and ranches can be staggering because of the high value of the equipment, livestock, crops, pastures, timber, water systems, and any other components of farm businesses. Fences are \$10,000 a mile, a combine is \$500,000+, a cotton picker is \$900,000+, a large tractor is \$250,000+, and the old farm home and barns are priceless. It is relatively easy to replace a modern home with insurance, but most parts of our farms are irreplaceable, and a loss can destroy what our ancestors have worked for generations to build and recovery can take many more generations if at all. A Fire Adapted Community is a community or farm where "the residents understand the threat posed by wildfires and take actions necessary to help minimize this risk. The FACNET program is a grassroots approach that concentrates on plans and activities to reduce risk before a wildfire happens and is spread by people taking to friends and neighbors.

Farmers should clear a "defensible space" adjacent to the foundation of farm buildings to prevent a small grass fire from becoming a raging inferno in the hay barn.

I burned my Dad's hay shed down when I was 15 so I know how quickly it can happen. It only took a minute and one puff of wind to change my plans from "burning the field, to "get the hay baler out before the roof caves in". My father was not impressed with my heroics of saving the baler but was mad because we lost a cutting of hay that we needed for the winter.

Defensible space is an area (30 feet) around a structure where combustible materials are removed so a fire has nothing to burn and will stop before igniting the structure. Most of our rural communities have volunteer fire departments where the firefighters are not on duty so when a call goes out to a farm or home fire it will take some time for firefighters to gather equipment and get to the fire.

Defensible space will delay a fire until firefighters have time to arrive to control the situation and hopefully save your property. This same planning also works for homes in a subdivision. It buys time until the calvary to arrives to manage the fire especially if you are not home to defend it yourself.

Preparing your farm or home to reduce the risk of losing it all to an out-of-control fire is easy, inexpensive, and the right thing to do so why don't more people do it? They will say that "they have never had a fire on their property" but I remind them that that first one is a real bummer! Don't delay, take measures to reduce the risk of wildfire in your back yard and around your buildings today before it is too late, and the flames are licking up over the hill headed for your "Stuff".

Become Firewise and learn about Ready-Set-Go.... it could save you a lot of heartache, many \$\$, and give you peace of mind.

Contact Chestatee-Chattahoochee RC&D, the Georgia Firewise Liaison and Appalachian RC&D FAC Coalition administrator for more information. www.chesthattred.org and www.appcofac.org and www.firewise.org

RC&D
Frank Riley
Executive Director



Apple Tree Pruning

Deep winter is prime apple tree pruning time. Pruning apple trees is important early in the tree's life so that it gets started off right. Later on, if you properly prune the tree each year the tree will be more productive, more disease resistant, and have a longer life. Keeping all these things in mind, let's talk about apple tree pruning today.

The general advice that I give people when it comes to pruning apple trees is to prune as much as you feel comfortable, then go back and prune a bit more. Most of the time people are afraid of damaging the tree if they cut too far back. But if trees are pruned at the right time of year and the right branches are cut off, it will be better for the long term health of the tree.

If you have a tree that has not been pruned regularly, and you're trying to get it back into shape you'll want to start out by pruning out and dead or diseased branches. Second you'll want to cut out any crossing branches. Crossing branches create open wounds that can get easily infected. After you've pruned out dead, diseased, and crossing branches you want to try and open up the canopy. An open canopy will allow air to flow through. That's going to reduce the humidity, and therefore reduce the likelihood of disease occurring. The saying is that you want the canopy to be so open that a bird could fly through it without hitting any branches. A tree that has too many branches will not be as productive. An apple tree is only able effectively produce a certain amount of fruit. Adding fertilizer can boost the productivity. Therefore, pruning might affect the number of fruit you tree produces, but you'll have better quality and they'll be more likely to make it all the way to maturity.

Trees that have been properly pruned their whole lives will have more a Christmas tree shape than a teardrop shape. If you have a newly planted tree you'll need to prune it as well. If you have planted an unbranched whip you'll need to cut it back to 24 to 30 inches above the ground. This is going to encourage the new tree to branch out. If you don't prune an unbranched whip, you'll probably end up having a 20 foot tall tree that doesn't have any branches on it.

Sometimes people will plant a seed from an apple core that they've eaten. This can be a fun experiment for kids to see an apple tree grow. An issue that you may run into with this is that there is no telling what kind of apple tree will come up. If you plant a seed from your favorite apple, that fruit could have been pollinated by a different variety, leaving you with an unknown cross. Another issue is that nowadays most trees have been grafted onto a rootstock. The grafted rootstock will provide more protection from root diseases and may also dwarf the tree, which cuts down on the difficulty of managing the tree.

If you have questions about pruning apple trees, contact your County Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

UGA extension
Watching and Working
Jacob Williams



Letters to The Editor

Message to Climate Alarmists

Dear Editor,

As we begin 2020 let's be mindful of some of the things we are thankful for, shall we. 1) Vegetation growth has increased across the earth thanks to carbon dioxide. 2) Americans have rejected the radical and lousy Green New Deal 3) Fracking has revolutionized American oil production, leading the U.S. to become a net exporter of oil for the first time in decades. 4) Without petroleum, we wouldn't have: aspirin, bicycle tires, cell phones, chewing gum, computers, toothpaste, —oh, and solar panels, and, 5) If the world really is warming, that may be something to be thankful for—cold weather kills 20 times more people than hot weather.

Tim Groza

A Christmas Prayer

Dear Editor,

Jesus came to earth 2000 years ago, and what have we learned since then? Our country and the whole world are self caught up in self centeredness. When we can only think of what is good for ourselves and our country, it inevitably leads to trampling on the needs of others in order to achieve power, control, and material riches. Jesus taught us to care for the needy and poor and to love one another and even to love our enemies and to pray for those who persecute us. If we are ever to achieve peace on earth and goodwill to men, and if we are to live an authentic Christian life, we have to return to those teachings. Is it possible? If so, we will have to question our every action and ask if it is in line with the teachings of Jesus. It will take a change of heart. We will have to truly listen to the needs of those around us who are different from us—be it a different political party, a different race, or a different country—and respond as Jesus has called us to do. This Christmas, let us pray for a change of heart.

Vernon Dixon, MD

GUEST COLUMNS

From time to time, people in the community have a grand slant on an issue that would make a great guest editorial. Those who feel they have an issue of great importance should call our editor and talk with him about the idea. Others have a strong opinion after reading one of the many columns that appear throughout the paper. If so, please write. Please remember that publication of submitted editorials is not guaranteed.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR SHOULD BE E-MAILED OR MAILED TO: Towns County Herald, Letter to the Editor, PO Box 365, Hiawassee, GA 30546. Our email address: tcherald@windstream.net. Letters should be limited to 200 words or less, signed, dated and include a phone number for verification purposes. This paper reserves the right to edit letters to conform with Editorial page policy or refuse to print letters deemed pointless, potentially defamatory or in poor taste. Letters should address issues of general interest, such as politics, the community, environment, school issues, etc. Letters opposing the views of previous comments are welcomed; however, letters cannot be directed at, nor name or ridicule previous writers. Letters that recognize good deeds of others will be considered for publication.*

Note: All letters must be signed, and contain the first and last name and phone number for verification.



Towns County Community Calendar

Bridge Players	Every Monday: All Saints Lutheran	12:30 pm
Free GED prep.	Every Tuesday: Old Rec. Center	4 pm
Alcoholics Anon.	Sharp UMC (Men)	7 pm
Alcoholics Anon.	Every Wednesday: Hiawassee UMC	Noon
Bridge Players	Every Thursday: All Saints Lutheran	12:30 pm
Free GED prep.	Old Rec. Center	4 pm
Movers & Shakers	Every Friday: Sundance Grill	8 am
Alcoholics Anon.	Red Cross Building	7 pm
Alcoholics Anon.	Every Sunday: Red Cross Building	7 pm
Alzheimer's Supp.	First Tuesday of each month: McConnell Church	1:30 pm
American Legion	VFW Post 7807	4 pm
Young City Council	City Hall	6 pm
Young Harris Council	YH City Hall	7 pm
Quilting Bee	First Wednesday of each month: McConnell Church	10 am
Stephens Lodge	First Thursday of each month: Lodge Hall	7:30 pm
Chamber Board	Second Monday of each month: 1411 Jack Dayton Cir.	8 am
VFW	VFW Post	5 pm
Historical Society	Hist. Soc. Bldg.	6 pm
School Board	Auditorium	7 pm
Unicoy Masonic	Lodge Hall	7:30 pm
Conv./Vis. Bureau	Second Tuesday of each month: Civic Center	8 am
Gem & Mineral Club	Senior Center	1:30 pm
Arts & Crafts Guild	Calvary Church	4 pm
Lions Club	Daniel's Restaurant	6 pm
Mtn. Coin Club	N. GA Tech	6 pm

Have something to sell?

Let the Herald work for you!
Contact us at 706-896-4454

Deadline for the Towns County Herald is Friday by 5 PM



Towns County Herald

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