

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Our New Year Has Begun

Therefore in honor and remembrance of our most precious blessing, our United States of America, let's take a brief moment to remember those who fought for and sacrificed so very much for our fledgling nation. They most certainly weren't like so many of our political class today. Sacrifice for something bigger and far greater than them, inspired by freedom, liberty and the vision of our Sovereign Republic, unlike any other nation on earth. Not coincidentally, just as our Honorable Veterans and those who made the ultimate sacrifice have committed themselves to do ever since. It becomes very humbling to understand those who sacrificed from the very beginning of our nation and have continued to do so ever since. In that mode let us reflect upon only a few of the sacrifices of those 56 men who signed our Declaration of Independence:

The Veterans' Corner
Scott Drummond
USCG Veteran



Five were captured and tortured to death by the British. Twelve had their homes ransacked and burned; two lost their sons serving in the Continental Army; another had two sons captured. Nine of the 56 died fighting in our War for Independence.

These men swore to give their lives, fortunes if need be by their sacred honor.

Knowing full well that signing this most revered document could cost them their lives, these educated men who consisted of 24 lawyers and jurists; 11 were merchants; 9 were farmers and owners of large plantations.

Virginia's Carter Braxton, a wealthy planter and trader witnessed his ships destroyed by the British. With his home and properties gone in efforts to pay his debts, he died in rage.

Thomas McKean, hunted by the British, forced to move his family constantly, eventually keeping them in hiding and serving in Congress with no pay, lived thereafter in poverty.

The properties of William Ellery, Lyman Hall, George Clymer, George Walton, Button Gwinnett, Thomas Heyward Jr., Edward Rutledge and Arthur Middleton were looted by enemy soldiers and traitors.

During the Battle of Yorktown, Thomas Nelson, Jr. aware that British General Cornwallis had taken his home for headquarters, urged our General George Washington to decimate his own home with canon fire. Nelson later died bankrupt.

Francis Lewis' home and property were destroyed by the British and his wife being jailed, died soon after.

John Hart and his thirteen children were forced to flee from his dying wife's bedside. With all his property and gristmill destroyed he was forced to live in forests and caves, during which time his children vanished.

This was merely the beginning of our perpetual fight for our unique Sovereign Republic that many today sadly take for granted. In this New Year, 2019, let us all renew our vigor, honor, respect and yes, love for those who gave, and continue to give so much for our nation. Freedom is never free, never has been and never will be!

With humble gratitude for another kind reminder from Bart Rodgers, USAF Retired, and all those who have honorably served.

Semper Paratus

Forever War Part II

If you haven't heard the term, "forever war," it is perhaps a more honest description of what is otherwise known as the global war on terror. Eisenhower warned us about forever war in his farewell address to the nation. Yes, the seeds of forever war were planted a long time ago, but it was during the administrations of Bush, Clinton, Bush and Obama that the business of conflict was elevated to an art form.

How soon we forgot the events leading up to the capture and execution of Saddam Hussein, which opened Pandora's Box and destabilized the middle east for generations! Does anyone in America remember Clinton's wars, the destruction of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade, cluster bombs in Serbian markets, the disruption of the Yugoslav economy and the destabilization of southeast Europe? Millions are alive in the Balkans who do remember. Tens of thousands are dead who don't.

Does anyone remember the blatant lies about "weapons of mass destruction" in Iraq, or were we all soothed into forgetfulness by smiling photos of good friends, Bill Clinton and George H. W. Bush, globe-trotting together? Did we get a warm, fuzzy feeling when George W. passed Michelle O. a piece of candy during John McCain's funeral? Remember President Obama, the all time champion drone striker and weapons dealer, selling American arms all over the globe? What about President Trump, who is on track to exceed even Obama's world record at arms dealing?

And speaking of President Trump, blunt, unpredictable, unpopular President Trump, who was eviscerated for trying to normalize relations with Russia, attacked for pulling troops out of Afghanistan, what do we make of his actions? What do we make of the instantaneous push back of politics and punditry headlined and dramatized by mass media?

Who can say? What can we infer from the unified chorus of peace loving liberals, hawkish neoconservatives (republicans and democrats) and corporate media mouthpieces shouting their panic and outrage over the possibility that we might choose to remove thousands of our sons and daughters from harm's way?

Yes, I know. Fight them over there, so we don't have to fight them at home. We've heard that for almost 20 years now, long enough to expect that some kind of resolution be forthcoming. Remember when Shelby Foote, in that great Civil War Series, told the story of a Confederate soldier talking to a Union soldier across the picket lines one night? The Yankee soldier asked the Rebel, "Hey Reb, why are you fighting?" The Rebel soldier answered, "Because you're down here."

Is it possible that maintaining military bases inside sovereign nations, supporting brutal dictators, destroying economies, turning infrastructure into rubble and killing tens of thousands of civilians just might do more to cause terror than to prevent it?

But as the cards are shuffled and terrorists become allies and allies become adversaries, and as decades of bombings, missile and drone strikes and sanctions finally begin to fragment and diminish those who "hate us because they hate freedom," the forever war needs new enemies. Enter stage left, Russia and China.

The think tanks tell us that we need to fear Russian and Chinese hypersonic glide platforms capable of defeating most if not all of our countermeasures. Billions of dollars in research and development will be necessary to counter this threat, and if you invested in Lockheed Martin, you'll be happy to know that they were just awarded a sizable contract to help us catch up.

Of course, fool-me-once citizens might have a few questions. Given that governments are capable of lying (remember WMD's) we might reasonably ask if what they say is true. It might very well be true, but given that we spend more on defense than the next seven countries combined, is it not also reasonable to ask why we are playing catch up with someone we "defeated in the cold war?" I suppose money doesn't buy what it used to, or maybe the ruble goes a lot farther in Russia than the dollar does here. We might also ask why the recent Defense Department audit was off by trillions of dollars, but that's another story.

One of the benefits of living in a nation which promotes free speech is that armchair diplomats and sofa-ops soldiers, and all kinds of people with no skin in the game, are free to express their opinions on any subject. Many of us are beginning to question how our opinions are formed. I want to respond to one opinion in particular.

Go ahead and tell me that we have to fight them over there, that it's dangerous to consider disengaging from the nation destroying, widow making, migrant producing enemy factory of forever war. Tell me that we're foolish to reduce tensions with well armed adversaries (and their relentless tweets and subversive Facebook posts). Tell me that you're eager to send a son or daughter to fight. Tell me that you're ready to volunteer yourself.

So, you've never served, never said goodbye to a son or a daughter, a husband or a wife or a parent as they left home to travel thousands of miles to a place where they will be almost universally despised, and where not even the nation they're supposedly helping to "build" wants them to be there? You don't even know anyone personally who served? Well, You must be a Congressman or a Senator (or a network commentator or a former president or presidential hopeful). If you are, there's a better than 80% chance that you have no skin in the game of war. That's right, for most of you whose responsibility it is to allow, or not to allow the sacrifice of American blood and treasure, it might as well be a game, because you suffer no consequences from your actions.

Go ahead and try to press your argument by enumerating all the returns that we (the tax paying public) have received from our multi-trillion dollar investment in destroying and rebuilding countries, and how the loss of 7000 American lives was worth the sacrifice. We're not listening. We know who you are. We know you by the fruit of your labors. You came to Washington to do two things: To get reelected, and to work tirelessly to figure out ways to privatize profit while socializing risk.

Hopefully enough of us will see you for who you really are that we can send you back home.

The Middle Path

By: Don Perry

Radon Action Month

Radon is an invisible, odorless gas that causes lung cancer. Every 25 minutes someone dies from radon induced lung cancer, making it the second leading cause of lung cancer. During Radon Action Month this January, UGA experts are advising you to test your home for radon gas. I'd like to talk about what this dangerous gas is, how you can find out if you have it, and what you can do to reduce the radon in your house to a safe level.

UGA extension
Watching and Working
Jacob Williams



When uranium, which occurs naturally in Georgia soil and rock, breaks down, it produces radon gas. Radon is a heavy gas which seeps into homes from the ground and concentrates in the lower levels of a house. Radon can be present in any home, regardless of the age or type of home. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that about 6.7% of homes nationwide have elevated levels of radon gas; however, in some counties the levels are higher. Homes in north Georgia can have high levels of radon. In Union County, between March 2003 and July 2017, about 46.5% of the homes tested had elevated levels of radon. In Towns County it was 33.1%. An elevated level of radon is anything at, or above, 4 picocuries per liter (pCi/L). Being exposed to a level of 4 pCi/L has similar health effects as smoking 8 cigarettes per day.

The only way to know if your home has a high level of radon is to test for radon. Radon test kits are available from several sources, including local retailers, the Extension Office, and by ordering online at www.UGARadon.org. Purchasing a kit from the Extension office costs \$10.

If a radon level in your home is high, it is fixable. Installing a radon reduction (or radon mitigation) system will reduce high levels of indoor radon to acceptable levels. The system most commonly used is a vent pipe system, which includes a fan that pulls radon from beneath the house and vents it to the outside.

Just because your neighbor has had a negative radon test does not mean that your house isn't affected. Also, if your neighbor has had a positive test it doesn't mean that you have radon in your home. It is advisable to still test your own home. Experts usually advise that you have your home tested regularly to make sure that radon levels are low.

Radon may also be found in drinking water. This is primarily a concern for individuals whose drinking water comes from private wells. In Georgia, wells drilled into granitic crystalline rock aquifers (pretty common for wells around here), are at risk of naturally occurring radon contamination. This is where the uranium that decays to radon can be found at higher levels. If you don't know if there is radon in your well water, have the water tested. The UGA Agricultural and Environmental Services Laboratories in Athens tests water samples for the presence of radon. To get a water testing kit, contact your local Extension Office. Testing for radon in water costs \$40. For more information on radon, visit www.ugaradon.org. Radon can be a serious concern in our area. It's best to be tested to know if you have dangerous levels in your home.

Letters to The Editor

That Dog Won't Hunt

Dear Editor,
 This responds to the writer's 12/26 letter fallaciously critical of mine published 12/19. Let's review: (a) My letter explicitly said "...I share [his] opinion decrying war and all its aspects..." (b) I believe he and I, myself a veteran of the Vietnam War, can agree that any war of aggression (a word never used or suggested in my letter) is patently wrong, (c) as anyone who knows me can attest, I am not subject to thought control, systemic or otherwise, and I confidently suspect that neither is he, (d) there was no distortion of George Washington's statements (as the writer well knows) by me or by the writer, as neither the writer's quote nor mine are mutually exclusive and I therefore suggest there was a reason Washington was recognized as "First in war, first in peace and first in the hearts of his countrymen", and (e) very importantly, if one wishes to debate the pertinent issues, the writer noticeably makes no reference to my letter's statement, widely held that "there is no greater responsibility for a nation than to protect and secure the safety of its populace" and to that, in circumspection and with absolutely no political annotations or considerations, I would add "whether internally or externally necessitated." If the writer wishes to debate (e) above, as supplemented, I invite him, in the spirit of public discourse, with no further self-serving tunnel vision, with no false statements, misstatements or innuendos and keeping in mind that there is much upon which he and I agree, to do so; otherwise, his piecemeal advocacy, which I otherwise respect, lacks complete credence, makes selective distinctions that do not make a dispositive difference and accordingly represents "a dog that won't hunt."
 Claude Spears

2018 Rainfall Data

Dear Editor,
 One of my hobbies is measuring and recording rainfall in the Gumlog Valley where we live. In 2018 I measured 85.5 inches. The driest month was January with 2.0" and the wettest was May with 11.1".
 The following data at our same location show how greatly rainfall has varied from year to year. There are also wide variations from area to area.
 2008 (44.2"), 2009 (72.5"), 2010 (47.7"), 2011 (56.4"), 2012 (50.0"), 2013 (87.0"), 2014 (54.3"), 2015 (79.3), 2016 (43.1"), 2017 (63.5") and 2018 (85.5").
 Average annual rainfall at my location for the past 11 years was 62.1" per year.
 Wm. Ronald Gibson



Towns County Community Calendar

Bridge Players	Every Monday: All Saints Lutheran	12:30 pm
Free GED prep.	Every Tuesday: Old Rec. Center	4 pm
SMART Recovery	Every Wednesday: Red Cross Building	7 pm
Bridge Players	Every Thursday: All Saints Lutheran	12:30 pm
Free GED prep.	Every Friday: Old Rec. Center	4 pm
Movers & Shakers	Every Saturday: Sundance Grill	8 am
Alcoholics Anon.	Every Sunday: Red Cross Building	7 pm
Alcoholics Anon.	Second Monday of each month: 1411 Jack Dayton Cir.	8 am
Chamber Board	VFW	5:30 pm
Historical Society	Hist. Soc. Bldg.	5:30 pm
School Board	Auditorium	7 pm
Unicoy Masonic	Lodge Hall	7:30 pm
Basket Weavers	Second Wednesday of each month: SC Fire Hall	10 am
USCG Aux.	Senior Center	7 pm
Hiaw Writers	Second Thursday of each month: Hiaw Pk. Comm. Rm.	10:30
Awake America Prayer	Civic Center	Noon
Mtn. Comm. Seniors	Senior Center	1 pm
Democratic Party	Civic Center	6 pm
Hospital Auxiliary	Third Monday of each month: Cafeteria	1:30 pm
Planning Comm.	Civic Center	6 pm
YH Plan Comm.	Third Tuesday of each month: YH City Hall	5 pm
Co. Comm. Mtg	Courthouse	5:30 pm
Humane Shelter Bd.	Blairsville store	5:30 pm
Water Board	Water Office	6 pm
Quilting Bee	Third Wednesday of each month: McConnell Church	10 am
MOAA	Call Joff @ 386-530-0904	
Book Bunch & Lunch	Daniels Steakhouse	11:30 am
Friendship Comm.	Third Thursday of each month: Clubhouse	6 pm
Republican Party	Civic Center	5:30 pm

Towns County Herald

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