

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Unrecognized History of the USCG

Or in certain cases, unknown history of our USCG. And even today in 2018 there are still many who do not know that our Coasties are our fifth branch of military services. Yes, if you want to volunteer to serve our great nation in uniform you have five choices, not four!

The Veterans' Corner
Scott Drummond
 USCG Veteran



Serving a unique role in our military the USCG serves as law enforcement and in combat. Its 42,000 active duty members and well as its 7500 reservists are often called Coasties. In 1790 Alexander Hamilton became the father of the Coast Guard. In Federalist No. 12, Hamilton wrote that a "few armed vessels, judiciously stationed at the entrances of our ports, might at a small expense be made useful sentinels of the laws." Their purpose would be enforcing maritime laws and collecting tariffs. Back then our government was broke and Hamilton pushed hard to get his new "Revenue-Marine" funded. From personal experience that hasn't changed much. Soon to be named Revenue Cutter Service, sometimes called "system of cutters", eventually merged with the United States Life-Saving Service (which helped shipwrecked sailors) thus becoming the Coast Guard, and serving under the Department of Treasury.

Did you know that our USCG predates our US Navy? It's our oldest continuous seagoing service. And our smallest military service. The Continental Navy being disbanded in 1790, left the only Navy of the United States as Hamilton's Revenue-Marine. However the Barbary pirates (Muslim sea-going raiders), posed a serious threat to the young USA at sea, which became another mission for the Revenue-Marine. In 1797 the first three much needed warships of our US Navy set sail to protect maritime sailors and ships from the pirates. The Coast Guard ran the District of Alaska. The US Light-house service, under command of the Revenue Cutter Service was tasked with laying telegraph cable from the USA to Russia. During the 1870s our early Coasties still called Revenue Cutter Service had to enforce hunting and fishing laws in the wild Alaskan territory. Also during that era, just as today, they inherited the daunting task of rescuing ships and saving lives in the treacherous Bering Sea and along the Arctic coast. This early version of our USCG also provided food, medicine, supplies and held court cases for villagers in the arctic.

Trivia: Did you know that Lloyed Bridges and Cesar Jeff served in our USCG? So did Arnold Palmer and Cesar Romero.

The Department of Defense assumes control of the USCG while serving in war zones. Since 2002 the USCG is controlled by Homeland Security. In prior eras the USCG has been under control of Treasury and Transportation Departments.

I did not know this! Commander Bruce Melnick, chief test pilot for USCG Aircraft was the first Coastie to serve as an Astronaut, aboard the Space Shuttle "Discovery", 1990 and again, 1992 on Space Shuttle "Endeavour". Logging over 300 hours in space, it appears our "coast" has expanded into outer space.

More USCG history forthcoming.

Semper Paratus

Letters to The Editor

Thanks, Zell

Dear Editor,

I recently discovered this article that I wrote some time ago. I'm not sure if I had it published at the time, but I feel it is fitting to do so at this time. Zell Miller was one of the most distinguished Towns Countians in history!

"What comes to your mind when you hear politician? One of the definitions in Webster's is "one who engages in politics for personal or partisan aims". I would like to focus on a person who served in local, state and federal positions. The one who I am writing about is Zell Miller. In one of his books, he stated that upon arriving in Washington, DC, he discovered a situation with which he could not go along. For the remainder of his term, he often sided with the opposition party. My writing is not to expound on the virtues or non-virtues of either party. I would like to say that we need more politicians like Zell Miller. Ones who will vote their conscience, even though it may go against their own political party! After all, it is the taxpayer's money that is paying their salary and first and foremost, they need to be a servant of the people. This applies to local, state and federal government.

I am proud to call Zell Miller my life-long friend. Thanks, Zell, for your long and distinguished career serving the citizens of Georgia."

With warmest regards,
 Michael D. Hedden

Climate Change - Bipartisan Solution

Dear Editor,

Climate change has been a very divisive subject in our country. Why? Opponents fear that it will damage our economy, and they fear government regulations, the growth of big government, and the destruction of our free market economy. There is always the big question of serious doubts that climate change is real. These are very real concerns, and, though I advocate for action on climate change, I too do not want government regulation, and I certainly do not want to hurt our economy. Our free market economy has made America the leading economy in the world, and it should be preserved.

So, what are we to do? Being a fiscal conservative, I have found only one plan that I believe can heal the divide, grow our economy, and actively combat climate change. Simply place a fair price on the production of greenhouse gases from fossil fuels, return the money to all US citizens as a monthly dividend, and then let the free market take over! The price of wind and solar would soon be cheaper than fossil fuels, giving American manufacturers the incentive to invest in Green Energy. American ingenuity would then propel us to be the leader in the Green Energy revolution, which would assure America as being the leading economy in the world.

This plan is eminently fair, for companies responsible for the pollution should be held accountable for the damage they cause, which you and I now pay for. Most Americans would come out ahead due to the monthly dividend, it would grow our economy, and it would add millions on new American jobs. And even if climate change were not real, we would be left with a healthier, stronger, more prosperous America. Fair, simple, quick, effective, market driven, free from government regulations, and correcting the market distortions that do not take into account the damages caused by fossil fuels. I believe it is a plan we can all support.

Vernon Dixon, MD

It's a Dog's Life

"It's a dog's life" comes to us from the 16th century, when the expression referred to the general misery of the canine clan at the hands of their human masters. The idiom evolved into a proverb, "It's a dog's life - hunger and ease" a century later. Today the phrase continues its semantic odyssey, and "it's a dog's life" is used to advertise pish kennels and canine treats.

We know that not every dog shares in the prosperity enjoyed by the pampered pooches of dogfood commercials. Cue the soulful background music and images of frightened animals abused and abandoned, waiting in a shelter for either adoption or destruction: A stark contrast to Facebook posts and funny-video television shows.

The best of us cannot countenance suffering, and some of those best can be found working or volunteering at animal shelters, where every year about 7 1/2 million dogs and cats are sent. About a million and a half of that number are euthanized every year. Do the math, and you can understand the note of desperation in those hard-to-watch commercials encouraging us to adopt a pet.

If you are looking for a pet, a shelter animal is a good deal. For a nominal fee you get a companion that has been spade or neutered, and vaccinated. Shelter animals are almost always healthier than pet store ones, and we can tell you from personal experience that an animal from one of the shelters in our area will have been treated with kindness.

For some people, the idea of owning a pet is not matched by an equivalent sense of responsibility. Our civil society discourages cruelty in any form, but the law does not and cannot prevent all suffering. We're not talking about obvious cases of abuse. There is plenty of suffering that is perfectly legal. As we travel from the country through suburbia and into the city, it is not uncommon to see a dog tethered to a short lead, isolated and exposed to the elements day after day, night after night.

Some towns have ordinances which prevent this kind of cruelty, but the alternative is a cage, a prison where the hapless animal eats, sleeps and waits, until the long hours of their short lives are utterly spent. Creatures that can run for miles without tiring, with senses many times more acute than their human captors, are forced to observe the world without being able to participate in it. Social animals that respond to affection are isolated, often from their own kind as well as from the human companionship they crave. Their only interaction with other living creatures is when their owners open the gate to dispense more dry kibble bought on sale at the nearest big box store, and remove (hopefully) their waste.

Our old family home is in a neighborhood where the lonesome barking of despairing creatures is a daily and nightly reminder of human ambivalence. The neighbors on either side of our house have dogs, and these poor creatures live out their lives in conditions very similar to those described above.

On one side, the neighbor had one of those dogs that are kept in some circles as a symbol of machismo. The fearsome appearance of this prisoner gave little indication of her sweet disposition. She craved human company and activity, and when we would play ball in the back yard with our own pups, this poor creature would cry out in pain and longing. Occasionally we would throw a tennis ball over the fence to her, which would calm her for a while. When she got to know us this ferocious monster would bark happily and wag her tail whenever we appeared. This was the only fun she had, and the only interaction with another creature other than the times when her owner would dump dry dog food into her bowl.

The neighbor on the other side has two bird dogs that live in an 8x10 pen. Perhaps he hunted with dogs when he was younger, but that time is many years past. Perhaps the two beagles he currently has are reminders of happier days, but these dogs have never been on a hunt. They live out their lives in a shaded corner of a wooded lot where they cannot see anything that happens around them - but they can hear and smell life passing by, and their only way to participate is to bark. And bark. Our neighbor talks to them from time to time when he feeds them, but they never get to run or play. They are never petted or brushed or allowed to leave their tiny prison.

Somewhere between ambivalence and arrogance is the state of mind which treats a pet like an appliance, like an inanimate object which can be disregarded at will. One wonders at the impulse which inspires the person who isolates and imprisons a dog to get one in the first place. Was it the ghost of a childhood memory, or in the case of our neighbor, an attempt at gaining some kind of twisted status symbol by having one of "those" dogs?

We have no respect for anyone who acquires a pet of any kind without making a commitment to provide that animal with a happy life. Pets are not furniture. It would have been kinder for such a person to have allowed the shelter to destroy the animal rather than subjecting it to an imprisonment of loneliness and longing. It would be justice for anyone who has condemned an animal to such an existence to have to experience, even for a day, a dog's life.

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.

The Middle Path

By: Don Perry

A statesman from Georgia and a Civil War general from Virginia shared something in common even though their time on this earth was separated by six decades. They finished strong.

Robert E. Lee said "I would rather die a thousand deaths" than meet with Ulysses S. Grant to surrender his army. Yet he did, and arguably preserved the lives of thousands in doing so. During the five years he lived after Appomattox, he rejected calls for former Confederates to press an insurgency against the Union. He signed an oath of allegiance to the U.S., and became president of Washington College in Lexington, Virginia. He wrote, "I think it is the duty of every citizen, in the present condition of the country, to do all in his power to aid in the restoration of peace and harmony."

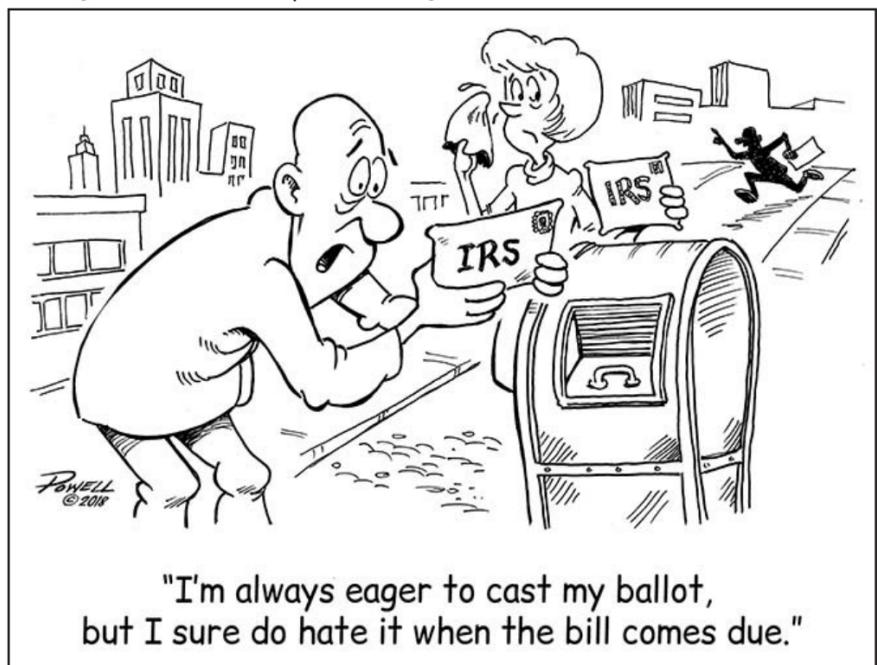
I read Charles Flood's book, "Lee the Last Years," while Zell Miller was Georgia's U.S. Senator. Like Lee, in his final years he put statesmanship above previous allegiances for the good of his fellow citizens. In his iron-fisted speech at a political convention in 2004, he excoriated his own party's candidate for weakening our country's defenses. After listing votes against various weapons, he thundered, "This is the man who wants to be commander in Chief of our U.S. Armed Forces? Forces armed with what? Spitballs?" Fearless!

After Mr. Miller retired (again) I wrote to thank him for his service and mention my observation. He responded, "General Lee is one of my greatest heroes and to be even mentioned in the same letter is overwhelming." I'm honored that he took the time.

The Christian faith has something to say about finishing strong. You may not be a general or a senator, but God has prepared something for you to do (Eph. 2:10). In Christ, God gives you a purpose for a lifetime. "There is nothing better for (people) than to rejoice and to do good in one's lifetime; moreover, that every man who eats and drinks sees good in all his labor - it is the gift of God." (Ecc. 3:12-13).

To hear and understand God's Word is to plant a seed in fruitful soil protected from the pathogens of affliction, worry, or wealth (Matt. 13). This truth has no expiration date: "It is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13). It is authentic faith that embraces Christ's work on the cross in the past, His work in you today, and His plans for your future.

Paul wrote in his last letter, "The time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith" (2 Tim. 4:6-7). A lifetime of serving others, living purposefully, and trusting God is the life that finishes strong.



"I'm always eager to cast my ballot, but I sure do hate it when the bill comes due."

Towns County Community Calendar

	Every Monday:	
Bridge Players	All Saints Lutheran	12:30 pm
Bingo	Brasstown Manor	9:30 am
	Every Tuesday:	
Free GED prep.	Old Rec. Center	4 pm
	Every Wednesday	
SMART Recovery	Red Cross Building	7 pm
	Every Thursday:	
Bridge Players	All Saints Lutheran	12:30 pm
Free GED prep.	Old Rec. Center	4 pm
	Every Friday:	
Movers & Shakers	Sundance Grill	8 am
Alcoholics Anon.	Red Cross Building	7 pm
	Every Sunday:	
	Red Cross Building	7 pm
	Second Tuesday of each month:	
Gem & Mineral Club	Senior Center	1:30 pm
Caregiver support	Brasstown Manor	3 pm
Arts & Crafts Guild	Calvary Church	4 pm
Lions Club	Daniel's Restaurant	6 pm
Mtn. Coin Club	N. GA Tech	6 pm
	Second Wednesday of each month:	
Basket Weavers	SC Fire Hall	10 am
Board of Elections	67 Lakeview Cir., Ste. A	4 pm
	Second Thursday of each month:	
CVB Board	Rec Center	9 am
Awake America Prayer	Civic Center	Noon
Mtn. Comm. Seniors	Senior Center	1 pm
Democratic Party	Civic Center	6 pm
	Third Monday of each month:	
Hospital Auxiliary	Cafeteria	1:30 pm
	Third Tuesday of each month:	
YH Plan Comm.	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
	Third Wednesday of each month:	
Quilting Bee	McConnell Church	10 am
MOAA	Call Jack @ 828-321-2896	
	Third Thursday of each month:	
Friendship Comm.	Clubhouse	6 pm
Republican Party	Civic Center	5:30 pm
	Third Saturday of each month:	
Goldwing Riders	Daniel's Restaurant	11 am
	Fourth Monday of each month:	
Red Cross DAT	1298 Jack Dayton Cir.	5:30 pm
	Fourth Tuesday of each month:	
Lions Club	Daniel's Restaurant	6 pm

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Towns County Herald

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