

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Humility is Heroic

This story was sent to me by several fellow Veterans since 2011 when it was published. Couldn't believe that I haven't shared this before now, as this represents something so very important to not only military leadership, but each of us plain old American citizens as well.

The Veterans' Corner
Scott Drummond
 USCG Veteran



Retired Air Force Col. James Moschgat is to be thanked for his personal story of Medal of Honor recipient "Bill" Crawford. The Colonel was in attendance with about 200 people at an annual Pueblo Medal of Honor Foundation Golf Tournament Dinner when he first told of this. He was a cadet at the Academy in 1976, reading a book about WWII individuals. He read about a William Crawford from Colorado who as a private and squad scout with the 36th Infantry Division southern Italy on September 13th, 1943 and of his own accord ran through intense enemy fire not once, but THREE times and neutralized enemy machine gun nests which were holding his platoon in a deadly position. He relied upon his hand grenades and rifle to free up his platoon.

Afterwards, Crawford was taken as POW by the Germans and presumed dead. His Father was presented the Medal of Honor in 1945, however later that year Crawford and a group of Americans were rescued from the NAZIs. Bill Crawford re-enlisted in 1947, retiring in 1967 as a master sergeant.

Moschgat went on that after Army life that Bill went to work at the Academy as a "shy, shuffling" janitor. He could scarcely believe that this outstanding hero, Medal of Honor Recipient was the same guy he'd read about, now cleaning his quarters and doing janitorial work around the Academy.

Moschgat loaned Crawford the next day and gave him his book, asking him, "Is this you?" Bill Crawford humbly said, "That was along time ago and one day in my life."

He had casually mentioned to friends while working at the Air Force Academy that he had never received that medal that was given ostensibly posthumously to his dad. During that year's graduation in 1984, President Ronald Reagan formally presented him with the MOH!

Bill Crawford made child home at age 81 on March 15, 2000 while at home at Palmer Lake. His body is buried at the United States Air Force Academy Cemetery in Colorado Springs, and his everlasting soul resides in humble honor beside our Supreme Commander for a job "well done". A supreme reward much better reward than the MOH! Can we all learn from this true American hero's humility? Was his humble spirit responsible for his surviving near impossible odds and saving his platoon, and then surviving the horrors of a NAZI POW camp?

Further reading here: "A Janitor's Ten Lessons in Leadership" by Colonel James Moschgat, 12th Operations Group Commander.

Semper Paratus

Sentimental

Some of us are sentimental and some of us are not. Sometimes there are very good reasons for putting the past behind us. Sometimes treasuring the past can enrich our lives and contribute to a sense of place and purpose.

Nostalgia can encourage an attachment to keepsakes and memorabilia. I'm not talking about people who simply like to collect things, or those who suffer from the poorly understood affliction of hoarding, though if we live long enough, our accumulation of keepsakes might begin to resemble hoarding to an outside observer. When it comes to sentiment I'm somewhere between the extremes, but with one foot firmly planted in the nostalgia camp. If it is possible to inherit a tendency towards nostalgia, I know exactly where I got it.

I remember relatives from both sides of my family who filled their homes with memorabilia. Both of my parents treasured their keepsakes. As they got older and began to lose family members to time, their collections swelled to challenge the available storage space with inherited items.

For most of their lives my folks made sure that everything they kept was carefully preserved, labeled and neatly stored away, but as they got older they began to realize that their collection was beginning to get a little out of hand. My dad would laugh and say "One day when I leave this house I'm going to come up out of that basement and lock the door behind me, and then it's going to be somebody else's problem!" If you live long and are lucky enough to be able to stay in your own home, see if the same thing doesn't happen to you. Gravity gets much stronger as we age (I'm sure it's not a matter of us getting weaker), and when you apply acids and pain and sickness to a steep flight of stairs, the antique quilts and handmade furniture stored in the basement and in the attic just don't get as much attention as they once did.

Every new generation reaches a point where the halcyon days of youth can seem more compelling than what we face in the present, but I will always wonder if the generation of my parents was more sentimental than other generations because of the hardships they endured. Both my parents grew up during the Great Depression, when country folk who lived without ready access to goods and services, or money to pay for them, learned that you don't throw away anything that might be useful. They also learned the value of things that modern Americans tend to take for granted. My aunt, who had all the money she needed when she was old, kept a drawer full of plastic bags and rubber bands that she would not throw away, because they were useful.

A large part of my dad's collection was his WWII memorabilia. He was a combat veteran who served in the navy during some of the most intense campaigns of the war. One of his most prized possessions was an old periodical with a picture on the cover taken in Tokyo Bay on VJ Day, 2 September, 1945. Near the end of his life when he struggled to speak, he could still point out his destroyer, the USS Kalk, among the Allied ships escorting the Missouri during the official surrender of Japanese forces.

It was a cruel irony, but thankfully a short-lived one, that the little strokes known as TIA took away my dad's "gift of gab," as he called it, about six months before he passed away. He was a storyteller from a long tradition and a legendary talker among family and friends. On a family road trip to Canada he once talked non-stop across the entire state of Ohio. By the time we crossed the Michigan state line, even my mother's indomitable patience was wearing thin when she very quietly said to him, "Can't we just listen to music for a while?"

As a teenager, I would roll my eyes when my dad would say, "I've probably told you this before, but I'm going to tell it again." As an adult accompanying my senior dad on many outings, I did patience for my youthful impatience, watching how people would react to the old man who had just cornered them at the coffee shop, intent on telling a story. There is no doubt in my mind that veterans are the most patient and respectful listeners on the planet. Dad's "Tin Can Sailors" hat attracted quite a few conversations, and not once did a fellow veteran show any sign that they did not have all the time in the world to listen to one of the last of the Greatest Generation telling his story.

My folks have been gone now for several years, and their stories, (along with their collections of keepsakes) live on with me. I'm grateful that I realized something very important while my parents were still alive. Their collection of memories, the telling and re-telling of stories - these were not foibles of old age. They were part of an effort to keep their memories intact, and to preserve a sense of self in an ever changing world.

Think about it. Over time everything that we hold dear, everything that is familiar, changes or goes away. We can find ourselves lonesome in a world of rapidly accelerating change, and if we live long enough we watch our friends and loved ones disappear on our way to becoming truly alone. (Our nursing homes are full of people who have nothing and no one familiar left in their lives.) Our senses begin to betray our understanding of the present as we lose the context of the familiar. Our memories of the past can become more real, and more comforting, than what we think we see around us.

My dad told stories and collected old tools. My mom kept quilts and photo albums. It was an effort to preserve the rich tapestry of their lives, to bring forward into the present a re-creation of the past. Their efforts carried a hope that the memory of the lives they lived might somehow survive into the future. They knew many years ago that I would not be giving them any grandchildren, so the stories and the treasured objects were a way to pass on their legacy. I intend to share some of those stories here.

If you are fortunate enough to have older people in your life, take whatever time is necessary to listen to them. Their stories are more important than most of your desire-driven agenda. Like me, you may wake up one day to discover that someone you love has grown old, all of a sudden, when you weren't looking, or when you were too busy to notice. Hindsight is not universally comforting. It can be like seeing the answers to a test that you can't take over again. I hope I passed the test. Perhaps I'll find out one day, when I'm an old man telling my own stories.

The Middle Path

By: Don Perry

Black Walnuts

Black walnuts are a very common tree up here in the mountains. My backyard is almost completely covered with the walnuts every fall. I've been woken up very suddenly more than once in the middle of the night from them dropping on my roof. Black walnut trees are pretty interesting plants with some unique properties and uses. Let's talk about black walnuts and what some of those properties and uses are.

Black walnuts are in the walnut family which includes pecans and hickory trees. It can be identified by its leaves and bark. The leaves are alternate, pinnately compound. That means the leaves alternate from one side of the branch to the other in a kind of palm tree leaf shape. The bark has deep ridges in it that come together and separate going up the trunk. The nut has a green husk on it that turns to a brownish black color after falling to the ground.

Black walnut trees can grow to be 100 feet tall with a canopy spreading up to 75 feet. The trunks can grow up to 7 feet in diameter. Black walnuts are difficult to transplant because they have a deep taproot, making it difficult to pot them without cutting the roots. They like moist well drained soils. This makes them make good trees to grow along stream banks.

An interesting property of black walnuts is that they produce a chemical called juglone. Black walnuts put this chemical out through the roots and into the surrounding soil. Juglone will stop the growth of or kill some types of neighboring plants. It's like a natural herbicide that the tree uses to reduce competition with other plants.

Economically speaking black walnut timber can have dual value. The walnuts can be harvested and eaten. The actual nut which is edible is protected beneath the husk and a shell, making it difficult to get to. From personal experience I will say if you are peeling the husk off by hand to wear gloves! The husks will stain your hands. I used just about every product I could find from gasoline to quaternary ammonia to dish soap and the stain stayed on my hands until the skin that was stained wore off. Besides the nuts, the other value of black walnuts is from the timber. A single tree can be worth up to \$20,000. That price tag is only if the tree is of the highest quality. Unfortunately for opportunistic black walnut owners in Georgia we don't have the right climatic conditions to grow high quality black walnut timber. Water stress and cold winter temperatures that we don't get, but that occur in places like Iowa, lead to better quality. When European settlers arrived in Georgia they also cut down many of the high quality black walnut trees leaving behind short and scraggly trees that aren't as good for timber, and we see the descendants of those trees today.

It's also possible to make syrup from black walnut trees. Black walnuts don't produce as much syrup as maple trees do, and the flavor is a little different. The flavor has butterscotch and nutty overtones. One thing to be aware of before you begin making your own syrup is that people with nut allergies can be affected by walnut syrup too. The ideal time to tap trees is when you have cold nights with day temperatures in the 40s.

If you have questions about Black walnuts or other trees please contact your local Extension Office or send me an email at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

UGA
 extension
Watching and Working
 Jacob Williams



Letters to The Editor

New Year's Resolutions

Dear Editor,

As we celebrated the birth of baby Jesus last month in all of its glory we slowly take down our decorations and the tree for another year, looking forward to 2019 and what lies ahead which only God knows and I got to pondering what new resolutions I might entertain that would bring joy to my Savior, Christ, Jesus.

Yes, I have made a few resolutions over the years, but they never stuck with me for the whole year, so I am striving this year to be a better father to my kids, my grandkids and great grandkids. To pray for them more often and to send them cards during the year to let them know how much they are missed and loved.

Another point of interest would be to continue encouraging folks on Facebook to keep the faith and keep on trusting God in all things. I sometimes tend to forget to call folks now and then, just to let them know I am thinking of them and if there is anything I can pray for them about, also need to mend fences and relationships in the family.

Life truly is short and what we do and say hopefully here and now will leave a lasting effect on the next generation coming up.

Will they know me as a humble and gentle person, one who went out of the way to help others in need and one who prayed that all would come to know the saving grace of our Lord and Savior, Christ, Jesus. We all have a choice in this life to make a difference in people's lives, to lift up and to support those who are less fortunate and to leave a legacy that will prayerfully have a positive impact on those footsteps who come behind us.

Jesus gave His disciples a simple, but profound command: Love one another as I have loved you and love your neighbor as yourself. It will be interesting to see how 2019 stacks up to my new resolutions I have challenged myself too. One never knows, unless one truly puts his faith into action. Though Christmas season is over may we experience the spirit of Christ all year long in our hearts and may God bless you all in this New Year of 2019!

Frank F. Combs

Kicking the Can

Dear Editor,

It is evident to me that President Trump is not a member, by choice, of the "Good Ole Boy Political Network."

I think he is trying to prevent, or at the very least, curtail, illegal immigrants from entering the United States.

How many years has a Band-Aid been put on this serious problem? It hasn't worked, in my opinion.

Folks that can, put a barrier around their home or business when it is necessary. It may be for attractiveness, but I think the security it provides is the primary reason.

Without the wall, the can is "kicked down the road" again. If considered again, the cost would probably double and be out of the question to be considered again permanently.

It really is difficult for me to understand (maybe some North Georgia readers can help) how anyone would be against installing a wall to prevent, or slow down, those that would enter without due process.

I think the cost, if the wall is constructed, would be returned to the taxpayers via a minimum border security force, a huge reduction in drugs and dealers, reduction in housing, food and medical costs, and last but not definitely not least, keeping out those who have no respect, whatsoever, for the law and law officers.

L.A. Moore

"As the new Governor of Georgia, I am ready to hit the ground running."



"If I can just get used to these shoes!"



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.	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
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	YH City Hall	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 Jeff @ 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
Goldwing Riders	Third Saturday of each month: Daniel's Restaurant	11 am
Red Cross DAT	Fourth Monday of each month: 1298 Jack Dayton Cir.	5:30 pm
Lions Club	Fourth Tuesday of each month: Daniel's Restaurant	6 pm
Hiaw. Writers	Fourth Thursday Hiaw. Pk. Comm. Rm.	10:30
Hiaw. Garden Club	Clubhouse	12:45 pm
Humane Shelter Bd.	Last Thursday of each month: Cadence Bank	5:30 pm

Towns County Herald

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