

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

William Jasper "Billy" Boles

I simply cannot seem to say enough about our Greatest Generation. Neither can Diane (Boles) Greer, who visited us for Sherry's recent birthday and was extremely kind enough to leave her exquisite, PRICELESS U.S. Army hand made scrap book, dedicated to her Dad, S Sgt. Billy Boles.

Billy was a lifelong resident of Duluth, GA born 12-1-1923. He was called Home by our Supreme Commander on 9-1-2019. He was a Methodist and a Mason. Diane loves her Dad and honors him as much as anyone can imagine. Billy had just turned 17 when he was inducted into our Army on July 10, 1940 at Fort McPherson, GA. He served in Company A, 23rd Armored Infantry Battalion from 1940-1945. Billy was given a cruise across the Atlantic on the Queen Mary, a former luxury liner, nicknamed "The Grey Ghost", as converted to a very crowded troopship.

Billy was assigned to the 7th Armored Division and promoted to Staff Sergeant in charge of a small group of 10 soldiers at St. Vin Belgium. They were forced to take a stand atop a small hilltop, caught in a blinding snowstorm, no food, water and slim on ammunition on December 22. The Nazis surrounded them. Years later, Billy said, "We were so spread out that everybody was fighting his own little war out there. You had no idea what was going on just a few yards away from you."

Some of these boys were later declared MIA. Billy was captured, became POW# 160990 at Stalag IIA Nuremberg, Germany. They were forced to move on Christmas Eve and later spent the night in a cold barn. Next day, with sun shining bright, clear weather and visibility, a Squadron of American fighter planes were able to bomb their German overseers, thus giving relief to Billy and those great Americans within that cold barn. Billy's "gift" that Christmas Day was a piece of shrapnel that came through the roof and hit him in the arm. Billy said, "It really didn't hurt that much, but it upset me." It was months later that a Western Union telegram from Washington DC, arrived at the home of Mrs. Ivah A. Boles, stating that a report received through the International Red Cross deemed William J. Boles is now a prisoner of the German government.

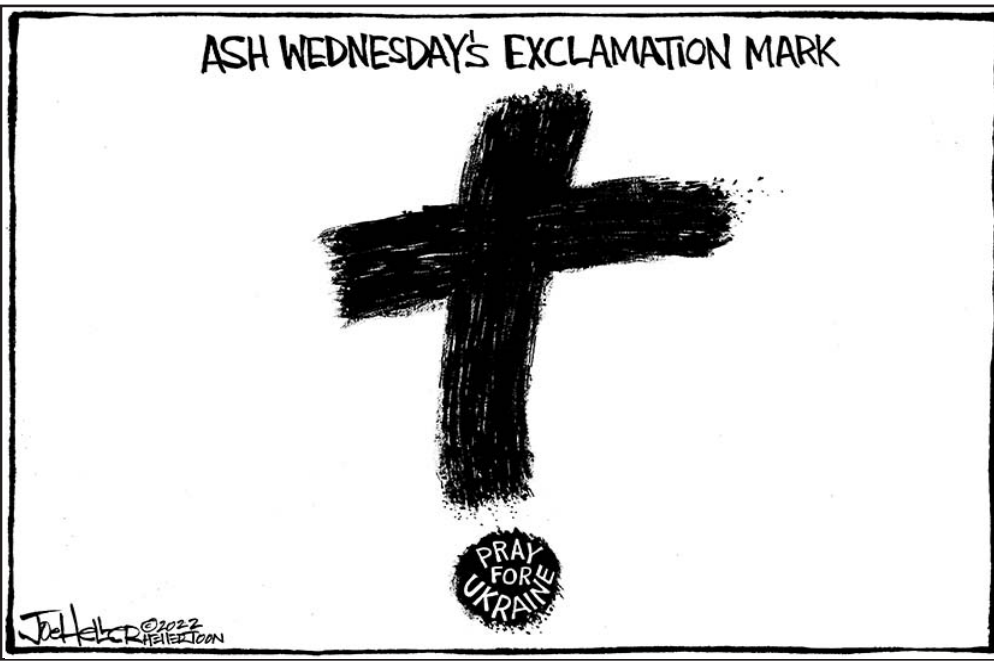
Now you'll understand why Billy's only request as he was leaving us in 2019 was for "Silent Night" to be rendered by those in the congregation at his funeral. So on September 3rd, 2019 at Duluth United Methodist Church those in attendance stood and sang "Silent Night", no music, just the words.

Just as Billy and his men sang that cold, cold night in that barn as they were held captives. Billy was 95 years old.

I knew Billy only in passing as he and just about all my elders, including my next door neighbor, Louie Echols, in Duluth back then were WWII Veterans. These fine men talked some about their experiences, but were mostly interested in just doing their jobs and mowing their lawns and being really great mentors to guys like me. These men of our Greatest Generation didn't make a "big deal" out of what they did for America and ALL of us. They were just glad to be home. It is incumbent upon us to "make a big deal" out of them and what they did. - *Semper Paratus*



The Veterans' Corner Scott Drummond USCG Veteran



Avian Flu

There have been reports of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) in commercial poultry operations and a backyard flock in Indiana, Kentucky, and Virginia. To this point there have been no cases reported in Georgia. However, it is prudent to talk about steps to take to protect your flock.

A point that needs to be emphasized is that Avian Influenza is not a concern to human health or food safety in Georgia. Any meat or eggs that are properly cooked are safe. Avian Influenza does not transmit efficiently to humans, making it extremely unlikely that you will get it. If you couple that with some basic biosecurity protocols, the risk of human infection is very low. In the few cases where it has been transmitted to humans those people had prolonged contact



UGA extension Watching and Working Jacob Williams

Unwelcome Irony

"Holodomor" is a combination of Ukrainian words meaning roughly to inflict death by starvation. This is how Ukrainians remember Joseph Stalin, who starved and relocated millions of people in Ukraine during the 1930's in order to consolidate power. The relationship between the peoples of Russia and Ukraine is complicated, with a history of conflict that stretches back 1000 years before Stalin.

The Donbas region in eastern Ukraine is one of the areas where Stalin displaced ethnic Ukrainians with Russians, and it has remained an area of contention since the Soviet Union fell in 1991. Following the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation in 2014, armed conflict between separatists and Ukrainian government forces has been a recurring problem for a part of the world which has endured more than its share of tragedy.

Since 2014, Russia has engaged in "hybrid warfare" in order to destabilize the region. This has included disinformation campaigns, irregular operations or "black ops," supplying weapons to the separatists and occasionally the use of conventional troops. This week, as anyone with access to any form of media knows, the tragedy in Ukraine has escalated.

It is difficult for a student of history to embrace the unwelcome irony of the virtue signaling and political pearl-clutching which now preoccupies news cycles, social media and the White House. Of course, we condemn the invasion of Ukraine, because acts of aggression are inherently evil. We pray for the citizens who, like any nation, have a right to determine their own destiny without being used by international bullies in the pursuit of greater wealth and power. But as the 1000-year history of this troubled region suggests, the first thing we need to realize from our armchair opinion sanctuary, is that we do not, and we cannot fully understand the conflict.

Most importantly, in condemning Putin's actions we also need to hold up a mirror to reflect the misadventures of our own government, which we have allowed and empowered to commit essentially the same acts of aggression, or have we forgotten so soon the Balkans, Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and Yemen?

Tragically, these are just a few of the conflicts that we know about; the ones that have been repackaged by corporate media for our consumption. We remain willfully ignorant of the disinformation campaigns, black ops and weapons sales orchestrated by our own government industrial complex as we remain far and away the largest weapons peddler on the planet. Unwelcome irony, again, in a government which dreams of disarming its own citizens supplying weapons to other nations to fight tyranny.

There are some things we can infer about Putin with some degree of accuracy. As several of the saner voices in international diplomacy have long maintained, a nation which remembers vividly the Cuban missile crisis would not be inclined to tolerate a nuclear handoff to its soft underbelly. Did we force Putin's hand? Historians will debate that indefinitely. They will also argue the degree to which the weakness demonstrated in our inept political leadership and conflicted social upheavals signaled to a determined adversary that there was an opportunity to strike.

Oh, but the sanctions... Yes, and Russia has over \$600 billion in cash from oil and gas sales to ride out the storm while Europe freezes and pays through the nose for scarce supplies, and China moves to support its ally to its own advantage. We will also help pay the cost of these sanctions in rising food and fuel prices, even though we do not import a single grain of wheat or a drop of fuel from Ukraine or Russia.

It is an unwelcome and uncomfortable irony that we will be paying higher prices even beyond the damage wrought by our own failed economic policies, because corporate consolidation of power and the monetization of all human activity has rendered our basic needs into "commodities" to be sold and resold in a virtual realm divorced from supply and demand and vulnerable to the vagaries of the global financial system.

If there is a silver lining in the dark clouds which have gathered, it may be that we have reached peak centralization. Empires like the Soviet Union are doomed to fail because of the independence inherent in human nature. Financial empires fail for similar reasons. A movement away from centralization would mean more privately owned business, more small companies, more localized and regional supply chains – and a more robust economy.

One final unwelcome irony: How odd that a culture which aspires to worship diversity should be so blind to the consequences of a lack thereof in business and in government. These are things to consider as we grumble and complain about the price of bread.

We might also remember to be grateful that we don't have to send our kids to school with their blood types sewn to the back of their jackets.

Outside The Box

By: Don Perry

worldoutsidethebox.com

Letters to The Editor

Thank You

Dear Editor,
At one of our recent church services, a person began experiencing chest pain. We called 911, and waited. Within 5 minutes EMTs showed up, and an ambulance arrived soon after. The response was quick and very professional. It is so sad that people in some large cities now call 911, and get no response. What a blessing to live in this county. Thank you to those responsible and God bless you.
Don OMalley,
Pastor, Christ the King Church

How we know Climate Change is real

Dear Editor,
The simple basic reality is based on physics. There are certain gases in our atmosphere that, because of their chemical configuration, trap heat. Carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, and water vapor are the principal ones. These are called greenhouse gases. As these gases increase, they trap more heat, and our earth warms. Pure oxygen and nitrogen do not do this. The burning of fossil fuels releases carbon dioxide- over 100 million tons daily. Other modern industrial and agricultural practices are releasing other greenhouse gases. Using well known physics, this equates to the trapping of enough extra energy in our atmosphere to be the equivalent of the energy from exploding over 400,000 Hiroshima type bombs per day 365 days per year. Hence our average temperatures have increased over 3 degrees F over the past 100 years, and this is accelerating. If we believe in science, it all makes sense.
Vernon Dixon, MD

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Our email address: tcherald@windstream.net

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Letters expressing 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.*

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Big Things Happening

In honor of Valentine's Day, Habitat for Humanity, and local businesses partnered up in an annual event called "Share the Love." For 3 days, local businesses donated products when you shopped, to Habitat for Humanity, hoping to further benefit our mission in making sure our community has affordable housing, safe and beneficial living.

We are so thankful for the opportunity to work closely with our local businesses here in Blairsville. Some of the local businesses that participated in this event includes; Blairsville Printing, Blairsville Restaurant – Grits & Greens, Book Bound Bookstore, Cabin Coffee, Farmer's Daughter, The Farmhouse Company, from me 2 u, Granddaddy Mimm's Distillery, Keen Creations & Company, Lucky's Taqueria & Rustina, Mountain Life Mercantile, Pat's Hallmark Shop, Cantina, Mountain Life Mercantile, Pat's Hallmark Shop, Rustic Mountain Décor, S & S Smoothies and Supplements, Seasons Inn Motel & Plaza, Sugar Magnolia Gifts & Interiors, Teppanyaki Time, Tin Roof Creamery, Union County Historical Society.

"Share the Love" is a great event that allows us to involve the community in our mission. Further proving our continued need for the support of our local businesses and community members. This event brings in a large sum of money to our cause. This year we are excited to use these donations to Helping Hands projects, and the home we are building for Brandy Snow.

We are still finishing up the final tallies from this event, but so far, we calculated a total of \$1000 dollars in donations! If you are a local merchant interested in being apart of the Share the Love event next year, be sure to reach out to us at 706-745-7101.

In addition, if you have been in the ReStore recently you would have seen a donation jar to raise funds for us to build a shed for storage on the ReStore property. We are pleased to announce that we will begin building this shed Saturday February 26th. The storage shed will help us stay organized and make for better shopping space in the ReStore.

Big things happening at Habitat for Humanity of Towns/Union Counties, and we owe it all to the generosity of our community!



Habitat Happenings Madelyn Bailey