

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

A Month for Real Americans

However, I speak of August, 2002, not that far back in time, but the polar opposite of what corrupt politicians gave away this past August, 2021. Our troops, Army, Navy Marines, Air Force and Coast Guard have never failed to do their jobs, missions and duty as required, requested, ordered and at times just plain stepped up to do as needed. Often times at great personal risk included bodily harm, even death.



The Veterans' Corner
Scott Drummond
USCG Veteran

Americans always and forever should be honored and grateful for those amongst us who have worn any of those uniforms thus should DEMAND via true knowledge of politicians via their votes that said politicians honor and support our military men and women in each and every way conceivable, forevermore!

Here's a fraction of what and how our men and women who volunteered began stabilizing the rough and tough nation of Afghanistan 19 years ago and going on 20:

August, 2002, Operation Mountain Sweep, first mission for 82nd Airborne Division in a hostile land. Troopers of the 82nd with Army Rangers and other coalition special operations forces mounted five combat air assault missions. Combat engineers, aviation assets and civil affairs detachments also took part.

Mountain Sweep continued Operation Mountain Lion in searching out al Qaeda and Taliban forces and information regarding terrorist organizations. Troopers discovered five separate weapons caches and two caches of Taliban documents.

The operation took place mainly around the villages of Dormat and Narizah, south of the cities of Khowst and Gardez. Troopers found an anti-aircraft artillery gun, two 82mm mortars and ammunition, a recoil-less rifle, rockets, rocket-propelled grenades, machine guns and thousands of small arms rounds. Coalition forces detained 10 persons. The 229th, serving as the aviation arm for Task Force Shark, conducted 14 helicopter missions as support. More than 2,000 Coalition forces, consisting of seven infantry companies, combat engineers and elements of three aviation battalions, took part. . completing Operation Mountain Sweep in former al Qaeda and Taliban areas of Southeastern Afghanistan on August 26.

Much blood and treasure has been spent in this effort as has and will always be done to try and defend civilization in a hostile world. Yes, we most certainly do live in a very hostile world, a dangerous world in many areas. There is no way we can solve all the world's problems. However our men and women who have worn and still wear the uniforms of any of our branches of military service have striven to insure that that hostile world remains outside the borders of our Blessed USA. Their jobs become even tougher when there are those who do NOT understand that or for other reasons, by choice give it all away.

Semper Paratus

Letters to The Editor

Get Vaccinated

Dear Editor,
COVID is exploding in our area. Get vaccinated. Wear a mask.

Cases of COVID-19 and hospitalizations are high in Towns and Union in Georgia, and in Cherokee and Clay counties in North Carolina, all experiencing rapid increasing numbers.

All four counties as of 8/22 have positivity rates in the twenties and are only vaccinated with quite poor rates in the 40th percentile (from covidactnow.org). The increases are occurring from the large number of unvaccinated people with the much more transmissible delta variant.

Don't believe in the scare stories and conspiracy theories. The vaccines are safe. Over 98% of the cases are coming from the unvaccinated. In our area, 25%-30% of emergency room visits are from COVID patients.

Union General Hospital reported in the paper that there are 70 patients in their 45-bed hospital. One CANNOT get the COVID virus from the vaccines. They do NOT contain any virus. Don't listen to the politicians, nor the conspiracy theorists.

This is something we should all do for our friends, our neighbors, our children, ourselves. The virus is a common enemy to us all.

Get vaccinated at Ingles, CVS, Walgreens, the Health Department, your doctor.

Talk to your doctor about the vaccines. Wear your mask everywhere indoors. I got vaccinated. Side effects were minimal.

Jim Grazis, CRT, RPSGT

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
P.O. 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.



Pirates Don't Lose Wars

When I think about the men and women we recently lost in Afghanistan, there's a young Marine in my head who has some very strong opinions which are expressed in language not fit for polite company. This makes every word here today an effort.

This ongoing disaster is a failure on many levels. We don't dissect all the opinions that you've already heard on the subject. Granted, it was absolutely the right idea. We should have departed the Graveyard of Empires long ago, but this colossal train wreck in planning makes burning your house to stay warm on a chilly night seem almost sage by comparison. What War College recommends abandoning your most strategic airbase just weeks before a withdrawal? What Commander in Chief ignores the pleas of experienced military officers to the military manager a military withdrawal in a military manner - because his political team needs a bragging point before the upcoming midterm elections?

Perhaps this is some rare species of strategy known only to the "perfumed generals" which presidents like to appoint when they desire sycophants more than they need good advice. Or maybe it is "strategic" in a way that would chill us to the bone if we knew the truth of it.

It wouldn't be the first time. Few of us remember, because few ever knew of the covert strategy to confront the Soviet Union that was hatched by Zbigniew Brzezinski, who was Jimmy Carter's National Security Advisor. The plan was to incite and support fundamentalist Islamic groups to "trap" the Soviets in a war of attrition which would drain their economy and destroy their political capital. It worked brilliantly, but the monster they created to fight the Soviets is still with us today, and now the proud owners of about a billion dollars' worth of American military hardware.

Perhaps the newly outfitted Taliban is a housewarming gift for China, which is eager to move in and exploit the \$3 trillion in strategic minerals which lies waiting underneath the rubble. At least that would suggest that there is someone, somewhere calling the shots who is able to think past short term gain or the next election cycle. The alternatives are troubling: That there is no one at the helm, or the captain and the crew are imbeciles - or they are not imbeciles, but rather pirates with no concern for the wreckage they leave in their wake.

Let's look at the pirate theory for a moment. We've discussed here before how well defense stocks have performed over the last 20 years. Companies which make weapons that create rubble did very well, as did certain companies with non-compete contracts for rebuilding the rubble. The "nation building" facade has always been suspect. We saw how well that worked in Vietnam, but in Afghanistan there was never a fully functioning civil government. It was more like a loosely bound association of competing factions which practiced extortion more than they governed. The Afghan Army was largely a mercenary organization, and when they saw that their employers were leaving, they went home too.

Partisan politics will never let a good disaster go to waste, and our Hatfields and McCoys in Washington are scrambling to spin this one to their advantage. But there is one thing that both sides are saying now that we can't allow to go unchallenged. Both republicrats and demublicans are talking about how we lost this "war," and we must collectively throw a penalty flag on that one. What "war?" How do we define "war?" (They told us Vietnam was a police action.) War on Afghanistan? What part of it? Which of the scores of tribes and factions and religious groups speaking dozens of languages and dialects were we fighting, and which ones were we building into a nation? "War on terror?" How do we know when we've won that? Can it be won?

"War" is a grossly misused word in our culture, but it gives us something we can wrap our heads around. It implies a good guy versus bad guy scenario, and we are always the good guys. "War" suggests that there is a state of victory which can be achieved (though strangely the people who start wars are sketchy about the details on that subject).

I think it's time for a more mature understanding of what our oligarchs have been up to, and it's a lot closer to a game than to war, though it's a game with deadly consequences. It sure seems like war to the people fighting and dying, but when you make decisions for which there is no personal accountability, you are not involved in a war, you are playing a game.

The United States did not lose a "war," because there was never a war to lose. Rather, some high stakes players have just walked away from the table, and though the ending is ugly, the winnings have already been pocketed. By some estimates, about \$8 trillion of taxpayer money was sunk into the bottomless pit of the Graveyard of Empires. It was the biggest money laundering scheme in the history of the planet. It was the sacrificial goat in the "war on terror," and for all those years that it was pushed to the background and forgotten by a citizenry consumed by other distractions, it made some people very rich. We can track some of the dollars that flowed through military channels, but we will never know how many taxpayer dollars were laundered through mercenaries, contractors, bribes and covert actions.

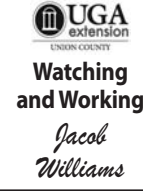
No, we did not lose a war, and nothing that news talkers, pixel pushers and political hacks can say will diminish the sacrifices made by the best of our people - sacrifices they made in good faith. The military delivered on every mission they were given. When they were attacked, they prevailed. They dominated every battlefield they chose to own, and overwhelmingly they conducted themselves with honor.

After twenty years of collateral damage, and the spectacle of watching the vacuum of our withdrawal filled by brutal extremists with a culture reminiscent of the Dark Ages, it may look like defeat to anyone glancing at the surface. But pirates don't lose wars, they just sail away after they have finished looting.

Outside The Box
By: Don Perry
worldoutsidethebox.com

Kudzu

Kudzu is one of the most invasive plant species that we have in the Southeast. It grows like wildfire taking over hillsides, trees, and most any landscape that it can get its green tendrils on. You will see it growing all over the place, so let's talk about the plant so that you can get to know it better and know what you can do to control it.



Watching and Working
Jacob Williams

Kudzu was originally brought from Asia in 1876. There are a lot of invasive species that came over by accident, however kudzu is not one of them. It was intentionally brought over and marketed as a plant that would be highly effective for erosion control and a good forage for livestock. Both of those thoughts are true, but as time has shown kudzu is too effective at its job. It was planted by the Soil Conservation Service and the Civilian Conservation Corps.

By 1900 it was being sold by mail order. The way that Kudzu has taken over the landscape here is an ever present reminder that we must be extremely careful when introducing species to a new area.

Most kudzu plants are hybrids of a couple of different species. They all come from the genus Pueraria. These species are capable of interbreeding and making hybrids.

What makes kudzu such a persistent weed is the deep root system that it can develop. Kudzu that is well established can have roots that are up to nine feet deep. These deep roots give the plant an incredible ability to regenerate after being cut multiple times.

Kudzu vines are capable of growing up to 60 feet in one year. All of these are why kudzu is called, "The vine that ate the south."

Kudzu can be identified by its vining structure. It has leaves in groups of three. It does have purple flowers, but these are usually hidden behind the leaves.

You can eliminate kudzu by mowing. However, you will need to mow it to the ground every week during the summer for 2-3 years. Kudzu sprouts from the crown of the plant or from seed.

If you can find the crown where the vine is emerging from you can cut the plant off just below the crown, and it will not be able to grow back.

Chemical control of kudzu is also possible, but it will take some perseverance. Products with Glyphosate or Triclopyr are effective at controlling kudzu. There are other products available for controlling kudzu but they are very expensive or are restricted use only. Either of these products can be used as a foliar spray or using the cut stump treatment. Cut stump means cutting the plant 2 inches above the ground and then soaking the open wound with concentrated herbicide. More of the herbicide will be active in the root using this method. Repeat herbicide applications may be required to eradicate the kudzu. Late summer and early fall are the best times for foliar application. As always, read and follow the label before using any pesticide.

If you have any questions about kudzu or other weeds and control methods for them contact your local Extension Office or send me an email at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

If I Wrote a Letter....

If I could muster the nerve, find just the right words, and capture the proper tone, I'd write a letter to Sole Commissioner Bradshaw. I'd probably do it early in the day so it might go something like this.



Around Towns
Dale Harmon

Good morning Commissioner Bradshaw. You know how I feel about Hamilton Gardens at Lake Chatuge. I suspect the outcome will prove to be short-sighted but there is no need for you and me to discuss it. I believe that you, as the government of Towns County, had the obligation to intervene and settle the issues between The Gardens and The Fair Grounds. If this had been done earlier, shortly after it erupted, the time of uncertainty and anguish could have been lessened and the future of all parties could have been considered and planned with less duress. In any disagreement where compromise isn't reached, there will be an injured party, one way or the other. The death of a thousand cuts could and should have been avoided.

I have always appreciated your willingness to meet with me in spite of your busy schedule. Although we've not agreed on every subject, I have always enjoyed your company and we've parted on friendly terms. I consider you a gentleman. It would have bolstered my confidence and respect in you as an elected official had you declared and carried a stand, even if not the same as mine. By extracting yourself, from what I consider your duty, were you trying to ruffle no feathers and thus fall out of favor with no one? Reasoned and explained decisions are appreciated and expected from those who sought votes and were elected to public service.

Sincerely,
Dale Harmon
If I were not so timid, this is the letter I'd write to Sole Commissioner Bradshaw.

See You Around Towns!

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