

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

History Review Tomb Guard

Many thanks to fellow US Coast Guardsman, Ron Willis for his wonderful reminder of our national history at Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia, Tomb of the Unknown Soldier Guards (Sentinels).

The Veterans' Corner
Scott Drummond
 USCG Veteran



How many steps does the Sentinel take during his walk across the tomb and why? Twenty-one as per our 21 gun salute, the highest honor. How long does he hesitate after his ninety degree turn, first to the East, then North, beginning his return to repeat the process? Twenty-one seconds between each maneuver and for the same reason as before. His gloves are wet, why? So he will not lose his grip on the rifle. Which shoulder is his rifle carried on? At each perfectly executed maneuver his rifle shall be carried on his outside shoulder, away from the tomb as the sentinel is standing guard between the tomb and any threat.

Members of the Old Guard must apply for the position. If chosen, the applicant goes through an intense training period, in which they must pass tests on weapons, ceremonial steps, cadence, military bearing, uniform preparation, and orders. Although military members are known for their neat uniforms, it's said that the Tomb Guards have the highest standards of them all. A knowledge test quizzes applicants on their memorization—including punctuation—of 35 pages on the history of the Tomb. Once they're selected, Guards "walk the mat" in front of the Tomb for anywhere from 30 minutes to two hours, depending on the time of year and time of day. They work in 24-hour shifts, however, and when they aren't walking the mat, they're in the living quarters beneath it. This gives the sentinels time to complete training and prepare their uniforms, which can take up to eight hours.

The Tomb Guard badge is the least awarded badge in the Army, and the second least awarded badge in the overall military. (The first is the astronaut badge.) Tomb Guards are held to the highest standards of behavior, and can have their badge taken away for any action on or off duty that could bring disrespect to the Tomb. And that's for the entire lifetime of the Tomb Guard, even well after his or her guarding duty is over. For the record, it seems that Tomb Guards are rarely female—only three women have held the post. The tomb is guarded by these very special men 24 hours a day, 365 days a year no regard to weather! For a person to apply for guard duty at the tomb he must be between 5' 10" and 6' 2" tall and waist cannot exceed 30". They must commit 2 years of life to guard the tomb, live in a barracks under the tomb, they cannot disgrace the uniform or the tomb in any way. After two years, the guard is given a wreath pin that is worn on their lapel signifying they served as guard of the tomb. There are only 400 presently worn.

May God bless all those who guard our nation and Americans!
Semper Paratus

Wildfire Community Preparedness Day

National Wildfire Community Preparedness Day – May 5, 2018

March and April are our spring wildfire months up here in North Georgia. Most of my articles are about wildfire preparedness in our communities and are intended to make you aware of the wildfire risks all around us and the small things that you can do to prevent one of these life changing events in your backyard. When conditions are right, it only takes one match or a small spark to start an out-of-control fire that can't be stopped before it destroys things that can't be replaced! Even though we have had only one major wildfire (Fall 2016) since 2008 in our area and no loss of life or homes, history is not on our side and eventually a wildfire will strike, and it won't be pretty. Imagine what this area would look like with all these scenic mountains were charred and the views turned black. Who would want to visit or live or visit here after that? Our wildfire education programs are working because it was reported recently that a couple of our adjacent north Georgia counties had 134 wildfires (no Firewise) in the past 3 years and Towns has had only 9. The trend is holding true this year also! Might be luck, but we'll let our Firewise programs take the credit for educating you as to the dangers all around us and you have taken measures to lessen your risks. The wildfire that we can have one day might not be as spectacular as the destructive fires out west, but if it is just your house or my house it is a tragedy just the same. The most dangerous months for wildfires up here in the mountains historically are November, March, and April, but we can't let our guard down the rest of the year because wildfires don't know which month it is and can happen at any time when the conditions are right. Wildfire education is a never ending, year round process. Join communities throughout the U.S. on Saturday, May 5, 2018 as the National Fire Protection Association launches its fourth national Wildfire Community Preparedness Day! Dedicate a couple of hours for risk reduction, or the entire day, and watch as your actions positively contribute to reducing your community's wildfire risk. Challenge your friends, your family, relatives, or youth organization to develop a project and join others throughout the nation in making big changes for community safety. Your efforts will help raise wildfire awareness, promote collaboration and bring neighbors together to work on projects that can help protect homes, neighborhoods and entire communities from future wildfire risk or current post-fire impacts. The Towns County Citizens Firewise Coalition has plans for an event on the square on May 5th so come out and participate and see what these citizens are planning to help make your community and home safer from an out-of-control wildfire. There will be all sorts of activities and food on the square in Hiawassee that day, with Smokey over-seeing the activities. Another of our events that day will be at Camp Rainey Mountain in Rabun County where we will have a wildfire preparedness day for 1200 Cub Scouts and their parents. Smokey will also be there visiting with the young scouts and giving them tips on how to prevent a wildfire. Plans are to have 5 stations around the lake, each with experts talking about various forestry subjects for the scouts to learn about forestry and fire. A highlight for the day will be a demonstration of aerial fire-fighting techniques by the Georgia Forestry Commission's 2 new SEAT (Single-Engine-Air-Tanker) aircraft. The SEATs are Agricultural spraying airplanes with a 500-gallon water tank installed for making water drops on wildfires. We will have "Air Smokey", a control aircraft circling over-head directing the air drops just like in a real fire situation. There will be radio traffic between the aircraft broadcast over speakers for the audience to hear. The SEATs will make water drops over the lake which will be an exciting event for everybody there. I still remember watching one in 1971 during my senior trip in Moncks Corner, SC. Some things you just won't forget and maybe the fire message they hear that day will stick with them also. If we can train our youth about wildfire, then when they become adults they will already know what to do to reduce wildfire risk where they live. Help the local Firewise Citizens Coalition help you by becoming Firewise, Are you Firewise?

RC&D
Frank Riley
 Executive Director



Listening

On that flap between Joy Behar and Vice President Pence...when she implied he could be mentally ill because God speaks to him. After all she is a comedienne, but this attempt at shock humor bombed. She did apologize later to her credit.

All Things New
Wayne Fowler



The reason the joke didn't work is because Christians actually do expect people to hear from God. But what we experience is nothing like Behar's implication that we hear delusional voices.

Henry Blackaby wrote, "When God speaks, it is to reveal something about Himself, His purposes, or His ways. God's revelations are designed to bring you into a love relationship with Him." Christianity is a relationship with God, and communicating is normal in a relationship. Jesus said, "He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear them, because you are not of God" (John 8:47).

Years ago, I experienced some folks confused on hearing God speak. During a Bible study, several older Christians agreed that they had never heard God speak to them. As their pastor I was incredulous, since they each had heard thousands of sermons, experienced the wonders of nature, read their Bibles regularly, and prayed routinely. But they had not considered ways they hear God other than an audible voice.

So if not by audible voices in your head, how do you hear from God? Suppose you read in the Bible, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Mat. 22:39). You realize you have neglected a needy neighbor or mistreated someone, and your conscience prompts you to act or apologize. You just heard from God. God speaks through His Word.

He also speaks through creation. "Since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made" (Rom. 1:20). The Creator speaks through the beauty of the world and the complexities of life.

Jesus sent his Holy Spirit to his followers. "He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak...He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you" (John 16:13-14). How do you recognize the Holy Spirit? It's surely Him if it moves you to understand and act on His written Word, love people, and reject sin. On other matters, consider what Jesus said, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me," Jesus said (John 10:27).

God can speak to you through the Bible, creation, the Holy Spirit, and also through prayer, circumstances, and other believers. The point is not so much how He speaks, but that He does. That raises our expectations and demands our response. There's no question God has spoken to you. The question is if you are listening.

Letters to The Editor

Kids vs. Pigs

Dear Editor,
 While Mr. Holmes' recent response sharing a history lesson and primer on guns may have made some sense, it is not a relevant argument today. Our brilliant forefathers never imagined the arsenals available to every American, sane or not. That was when life was more physically challenging and the new country and government very wobbly. Today we witness the unintended consequences of inadequate gun safety. The safeguards put in place failed; people failed to do their jobs and stop Mr. Cruz. Who will be the next killer to "slip through the cracks"? If bureaucracy made up of people fail and privacy laws make it difficult to arrest persons of interest, shouldn't we take more steps to make it more difficult for someone to own or have access to guns and/or rifles?

Times have changed and, therefore, so must our rules. We didn't have stop signs during the horse and buggy era; now we do as accidents with cars can be deadly. It isn't hard to drive a car or shoot a gun, but having the judgement to use either responsibly is why there are age requirements and laws.

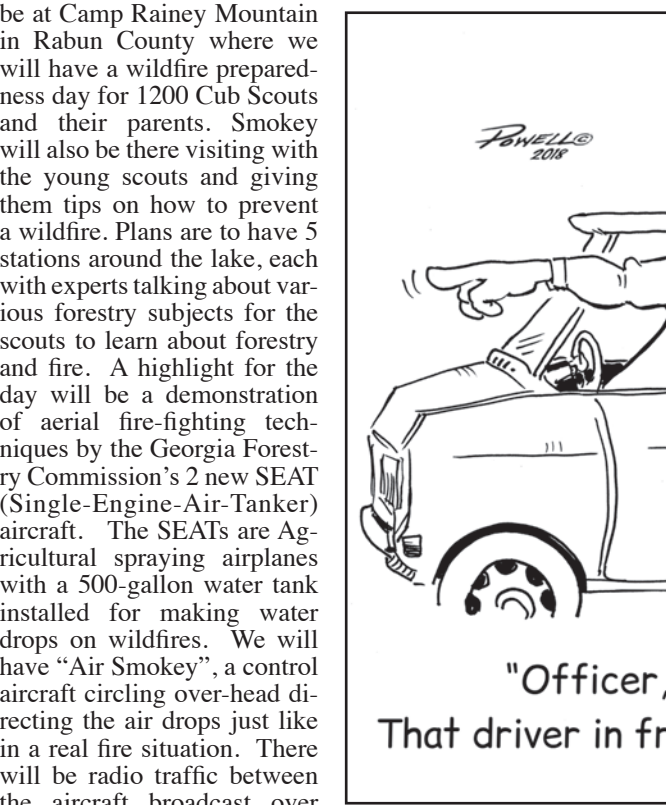
If people were more thoughtful, considerate and well-balanced, rules wouldn't be needed. Our complicated, highly technological society needs laws, rules, and guidelines that are able to be amended to address the speed of change. Who envisioned that FaceBook would be a tool for corruption, invasion and mind control by foreign governments? Innocent people are vulnerable to scams on the Net; however, the legal system struggles with the First Amendment and privacy rights to figure out how to let FB and other sites operate freely.

But the physical damage by automatic rifles, guns and accessories that convert guns to tools of mass destruction needs to be addressed immediately as the damage is permanent. Sociologists and psychologists need to help the legal community figure out early warning systems to identify at-risk individuals before they do damage to themselves and others. In the meantime, I hope the gun show people, retail sellers, private sellers and Internet sales sites take a hard look at their role and be proactive about the buyer's background before they sell a weapon that winds up as a tool for some disturbed person to take his/her rage out on the innocent.

Protecting oneself from wild pigs on an occasional pleasure outing does not justify giving any Tom, Dick or Hattie access to semi-automatic weapons. Sometimes there is sacrifice for the good of all; and it doesn't have to be forever, just until the epidemic is over. Be kind to one another. We are all there is.
Bonny Herman

Fanning The Flames

Dear Editor,
 Doug Collins, Representative from Georgia's 9th congressional district, which includes Towns County, voted in favor of the \$1.3 trillion omnibus bill. Collins who purports to be a conservative when he runs for office voted for this budget busting bill. This bill did not fully fund President's Trump's proposal for a border wall. This bill also funds sanctuary cities. It funds Planned Parenthood. It seems we have no right to a border wall or more ICE funding, but somehow funding for a private organization harvesting baby organs was never in jeopardy. It spends \$2.8 billion on opioid addiction prevention and treatment without addressing the flow of illicit drugs across the southern border. It offers \$350 million in additional student loan forgiveness, but only for graduates who take lower-paid government jobs or work for select nonprofit organizations. Representative Collins caved and voted with the RINO's and the progressive Democrats in getting this passed in the House. If he was a real conservative he would have joined the members of the Freedom Caucus to defeat this bill. It's time we found a real conservative to run against Representative Collins in the next 9th district race.
Tim Groza



"Officer, I was just about to call you!
 That driver in front of me was using her cell phone!"

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:	
Alcoholics Anon.	Red Cross Building	7 pm
	Every Sunday:	
Alcoholics Anon.	Red Cross Building	7 pm
	First Monday of each month:	
Mtn. Amat. Radio	1298 Jack Dayton Cir.	6:30 pm
	First Tuesday of each month:	
Alzheimer's Supp.	McConnell Church	1:30 pm
American Legion	VFW Post 7807	4 pm
Hiaw. City Council	City Hall	6 pm
Young Harris Coun.	YH City Hall	7 pm
	First Wednesday of each month:	
Quilting Bee	McConnell Church	10 am
	First Thursday of each month:	
Stephens Lodge	Lodge Hall	7:30 pm
	Second Monday of each month:	
Chamber Board	1411 Jack Dayton Cir.	8 am
Historical Society	Old Rec. Center	5:30 pm
Planning Comm.	Civic Center	7 pm
School Board	Auditorium	7 pm
Unicoy Masonic	Lodge Hall	7:30 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

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Towns County Herald

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