

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Eric England

If you know Eric England, it doesn't take long to realize just how humble of a man that he really is.

And the name Eric England is a moniker long associated with rare air in U.S. military circles. Outside of his native Union County, the name that is most often associated with USMC MSGT England is the *Phantom of Phu Bai*.

Eric Roy England, 83, a sniper for the United States Marine Corps during the Vietnam War, had 98 confirmed kills with more that were unconfirmed. The 98 confirmed kills in action is five more than the famed super sniper, Carlos Hathcock, whom much more has been written about.

Without a doubt, snipers are a special breed, warriors with a combination of shooting skill, cunning, and patience. Military history has shown that a single sniper in the right place at the right time can change the course of battle, even in the face of overwhelming odds.

Joining the U.S. Marine Corps in 1950, England was a National rifle shooting champion by age 19 in 1952, and a long-range champion by 1968, using a Winchester Model 70 30.06.

England joined U.S. Sen. (retired) Zell Miller and 15 other Georgia veterans inducted into the 2017 Class of the Georgia Military Veterans Hall of Fame on Saturday.

None were more deserving than England. A world-class marksman, England received his first competitive training in USMC boot camp that led to a 24-year career on the USMC rifle team, winning national and international competitions as both a participant and coach.

Although little is known outside of sniper circles about England's Marine Scout/Sniper career, he is highly respected, and the subject of the book *Phantom of Phu Bai*, written by Dr. J. B. Turner.

Hathcock, like England, a Marine Scout/Sniper, was once quoted as saying, "Eric is a great man, a great shooter, and a great Marine."

England was well known for out-shooting Hathcock at Camp Perry, in Ohio. Through the years, England has downplayed his mil-

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Straight Shooting

Charles Duncan



Jack Barsky

To me, his weathered countenance seemed beyond his 68 years, and his American accent was hard to place. There are reasons. Jack Barsky was a KGB undercover spy in the United States. But though his life was fake, he found something more real than he ever had behind the Iron Curtain.

A "60 Minutes" piece in 2015 and his recently released biography "Deep Undercover," tell the riveting story. It seems unbelievable that he could become so successful and visible in his assumed American identity beginning in 1978. Even more amazing, he escaped the tentacles of the KGB in 1988. But the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union within the next few years did not change his past. The FBI caught up with him in 1997.

As a child, Barsky rarely sensed love or even tenderness from his parents even though he tried to earn it through academics. He learned to stuff his emotions and internalize pain, qualities needed for a hard-nosed spy. As a young man, he fathered children but could not love them.

Something changed in 1987. His American wife gave birth to a daughter, Chelsea. The child's unquestioning love astounded Barsky, and made him see the world with new eyes. So, when the KGB warned him to return, he could not. His unconditional love for his daughter remained, but his marriage ended. Chelsea's departure for college unleashed the pent up emotions of his life, and he fell into intense loneliness.

God spoke to him through that pain. His new assistant at work, Shawna, had an inner peace that attracted him. She explained, "I get my strength from Jesus." She gave him a Bible to read, and followed up with discussions about it. He accepted an invitation to accompany her to church. The pastor pointed him to "The Case for Christ" by Lee Strobel. He listened to the radio program "Let My People Think" by Ravi Zacharias.

Barsky was convinced by C. S. Lewis's claim in "Mere Christianity" that Jesus is not just a great teacher, because what He taught means He is either a liar, lunatic, or Lord. What made sense in Barsky's mind became real to his heart in a startling mo-

See *Fowler*, page 5A

All Things New

Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

Part II - Interior Fire Safety

Q. If we have a fireplace or wood heater, what are some safety issues we should be concerned about?

A. Fireplaces and wood heaters can present a fire risk if not properly maintained. They should be cleaned and inspected regularly.

Q. How often should chimneys and fireplaces be inspected?

A. Annual inspections are recommended. Chimneys should also be inspected any time there has been a problem such as a chimney fire or if the chimney is not working properly.

Q. What time of the year should a chimney or flue be inspected and cleaned?

A. Inspections and cleaning should take place before the first fire of the season.

Q. What are problems that can develop in a fireplace or flue?

A. Chimney fires are a major concern. They are caused by the burning of creosote buildup in the chimney. Creosote builds up from the burning of soft woods. If the creosote catches fire inside your chimney, it heats up the chimney and can cause damage.

Q. Can a chimney fire cause a home fire?

A. Yes! Usually if you have a good triple wall pipe or flue liners in your chimney, it helps prevent fires in the attic. But, if you only have a single wall pipe or a fireplace without a flue liner, then cracking in the mortar or between pipe seams or joints, or rusted out places can allow the fire to escape into the attic and cause a home fire and this happens several times each winter.

Q. Who can we contact to check out our chimney or flue before winter?

A. There are several businesses in our area that can either inspect your chimney or they may be able to refer you to a business that performs inspections. You may want to look for a Certified Chimney Sweep or a recommendation from the Chimney Safety Institute of America.

Q. What type of wood heat works best in the mountains?

See *Paris*, page 5A

Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



Letters to the Editor

The Human Condition

Dear Editor,

When some cretin uses a firearm to commit an assault that results in mass murder, the hue and cry goes up against the firearm and bullet manufacturers, against the particular configuration of firearm, against the seller(s) of the weapon, against the mental state of the killer, and so on.

Why is there no outcry against Home Depot for having rented a truck to this assassin, against the truck manufacturer, against the gasoline refiner, against the Internet for encouraging such First Amendment corruption, against the religion that coached him to mass murder? Inquiring minds want to know.

George A. Mitchell

No roundabouts

Dear Editor,

I read with amusement the comments by our commissioner in response to Mr. Mitchell's letter. I have traveled extensively in Europe and the United States and I do not recall a roundabout on a major highway street or road except in towns or residential neighborhoods where traffic is supposed to be moving at a slow place.

If the argument is it slows traffic, why spend millions? Our present one lane major highways are already doing an excellent job of that!

We need four lanes or more passing lanes, not roundabouts on major thoroughfares.

Larry Madison

An antidote to the effects of poverty

Dear Editor,

Poverty, based on statistical correlations, is blamed for all kinds of problems of children and youth such as high crime and teenage pregnancy rates, and poor academic performance. Yet, I grew up in Union County during the 30s and 40s when poverty was severe, but crime rate was very low, pregnancy out of wedlock was almost nonexistent, and learning was not reduced.

If financial poverty alone causes the ills attributed to it, then growing up during the great depression and World War II in Union County or other rural areas in Georgia provided an antidote.

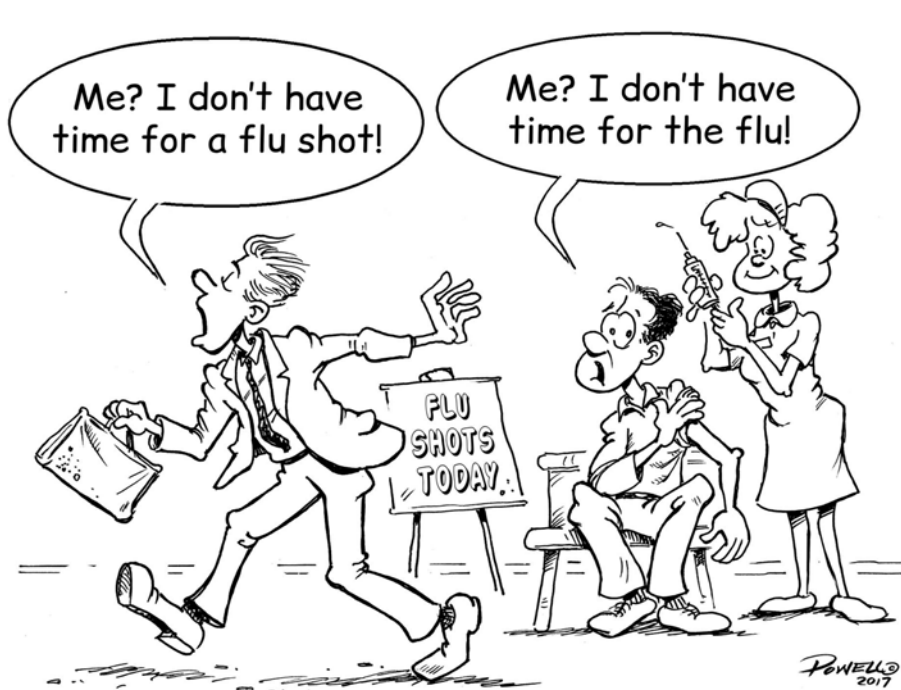
The poverty we had was of money and things but not of love and Biblical values. Most farm families of the time, including ours, had no electricity, telephone, indoor plumbing, or other modern conveniences. Our home in Lower Young Cane was so far off the main roads that the U.S. Mail and school bus didn't come within a mile of it. We plowed with mules while watching out for copperhead snakes. Nearly all parents of the era, although poor with little education, were loving and church going. My parents, with a 5th grade education, taught their four children the ABCs from letters on boxes they could find.

My grade school taught by Mr. Newman Parker, was a one-room school with about 15 to 25 students in 7 grades, a kind considered unacceptable now. Many others schools in the county were similar.

Union County High School was excellent with several graduates from my class of 43 students attending college. Five Union County High graduates, my sister Barbara Grace and I, Max Colwell, Robert W. Jones, and Charles Jenkins, went to Berry College in 1948. Berry at that time was a small, low-cost college with under paid faculty that accepted only boys and girls from low-income families living in rural areas and small towns in the South.

All students had to work two days a week to help pay some of the cost. We also had to wear uniforms, study the Bible, and attend church on campus. After college and three years in the U.S. Army, I completed a MS and a PhD degree at Georgia and Cornell, respectively, aided by a GI bill. Charles Jenkins who has had a great life in industry and local politics is well known in

See *Abernathy*, page 5A



What it takes

When I first joined the fire department, I was not sure what to expect. Sure, I had watched TV and seen the shows like "Emergency," and "Rescue 911," but I wasn't sure. When I joined, I was shown the extraordinary world of emergency services. I knew it was for me. The first thing that was evident to me was how exciting and rewarding volunteer firefighting could be. The second was the commitment that it took to be a volunteer firefighter.

What are you committing to when you become a volunteer firefighter? The department is looking for self-motivated people who are community-orientated and want to help others. Being a volunteer firefighter is the most unique way to service your community.

The first commitment is to ask yourself if you are that self-motivated person who wants to give back to their community and help others.

The second is to apply. This takes some courage for some. Applying to be a firefighter is not something that people do every day. I have a lot of respect for people who apply. These are people who say, "I want to be a volunteer firefighter. I want to go to emergencies in my community and help people on what may be one of the worst days of their lives!" Commit to applying!

The third commitment is to train. To safely and effectively respond to emergencies, volunteer firefighters must have the knowledge and training to do the job. The initial training covers firefighting equipment; how to use the equipment; and firefighting tactics. Once the initial training is completed, volunteer firefighters can respond to emergencies. There are many areas including medical and rescue that firefighters can get additional training. Volunteer firefighters must also attend a certain amount of training each year to maintain certification.

The fourth commitment is to respond. Fires and emergencies can happen at any time, day or night. The volunteer firefighters must be committed to going on a call. Volunteer firefighters are not expected to go on every call, but the more volunteer firefighters responding to these emergencies, the better the emergency can be handled.

We all have busy lives, but we can always find time to help others. We are looking for people, who are willing to help their community; who want to learn; and who want to respond. Serving as a volunteer firefighter can be one of the most rewarding things you ever

See *Chief*, page 5A

Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief

David Dyer



Better times a coming

After graduation, Paul worked around his dad's farm for a couple of months and then left to attend college at the University of Arkansas. He had been offered a scholarship to play baseball for the Razorbacks. Back in those days student athletes were allowed to practice more than present day athletes. So, the Arkansas baseball team held late summer baseball practices. Paul was exposed to some really good pitching that he was able to handle. The young man was left-handed and was able to hit the best pitchers on the team.

However, there was a young man present who had recently left Arkansas because he had received an invitation to try out with the St. Louis Cardinals. This lefty pitcher had a wicked curve ball and slider. The fellow's fastball approached 100 mph and trying as much as possible Paul could not connect with this fellow's pitches. Just when he thought he'd catch up to a fastball Paul would receive a curve ball. Then even though Paul knew it was coming the fellow's slider would always strike him out. He would say, "I knew the slider was coming and it was always in the dirt, but, I couldn't help it. I would always swing at the last pitch."

So, by the end of fall practice Paul was really discouraged. He couldn't get a hit off this guy. On top of his batting problems Paul was worried about his girlfriend back at home.

Paul just knew his old nemesis was going to steal his gal. On top of everything else was the fact that he was bored. The young man was in a new town and didn't know anyone except those other folks on the team. He had no idea about what he should study so Paul was just taking core classes. In essence, the young man was discouraged, lonely and confused about his future. So, he left Arkansas and went home to North Alabama.

Paul's father, Columbus, cried like a baby when his son came home from college. But, soon things got back to normal for the young man. He found a job at a textile mill where he worked during the week and played baseball on the mill's team on weekends. Paul also loved basketball and soon landed a job as a basketball referee for local high school games. This job soon landed him in hot water. Paul's old High School team, Phil Campbell, was playing their arch rival, Hackleburgh. Paul's brother, Bud, played for Phil Campbell as well as many of his younger friends.

Paul said the game was generally nip and tuck, with first Hackleburgh being in front, and

See *Cummings*, page 5A

Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Acorn toxicity

Many small wildlife species depend on the numerous acorns that fall in late summer and autumn to sustain them through the winter. However, to most animals, acorns can be highly toxic and cause a dangerous illness known as "Quercus poisoning."

The term "quercus" is derived from part of the scientific names for many species of oak trees. Numerous oak trees are native to our area and many of them produce huge crops of acorns that we can see starting to drop all around the county. Quercus poisoning occurs when an animal ingests too many acorns in the fall or too many oak buds in the spring. Many domestic pets such as dogs are susceptible to this, but most cases are seen in cattle and sheep. In times of drought or large grass pest infestations, such as this past summer, cattle will take to eating other plant material since there is not enough healthy grass to satisfy them. Since those juicy green acorns are falling all around or hanging onto the tips of branches right now, they are a tempting treat to a cow that does not have access to the fresh grass it wants.

If a cow has ingested too many acorns, symptoms usually take a few days to appear. The animal may have nasal discharge, rapid weight loss, loss of appetite or diarrhea. Acorns also produce toxins that can cause extensive kidney damage, so it is important to be on the lookout for these symptoms before the disease advances. Once quercus poisoning extends to the kidneys, the damage is irreversible.

The best way to fight this disease is to make sure it does not happen in the first place. Though fencing may be expensive, in the long run, it is better to keep animals separated from mature oak trees that produce many acorns. It will be worth it to avoid costly vet bills. Some dairy producers have found that a ration containing ten per cent calcium hydroxide can prevent toxicity, but with beef cattle this is not feasible because there is no guarantee they are eating what they need to of the ration.

Calves and yearlings are the most susceptible cattle to quercus toxicity because the smaller the body size, the fewer acorns need to be ingested to induce illness. The larger the animal, the more acorns need to be ingested to induce symptoms. The green acorns we currently see falling are often the most toxic, because the chemicals within them tend to break down and be less concentrated as the nuts mature.

In order to make sure that your cattle are not tempted by these tasty yet toxic treats, try to block off sections of pasture with a lot of

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UGA Extension From the Ground Up

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North Georgia News

Published since 1909 • Legal Organ of Union County

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Publication No: 001505

Advertising, News deadlines Friday at 4 p.m. • Mail Service for all subscriptions except 30512, 30514 & 30572 - 1 Year \$35. In county, carrier delivered subscription is \$3. All subscriptions must be paid in advance. NORTH GEORGIA NEWS is published weekly by NGN/TCH, Inc., 266 Cleveland Street, Blairsville, Georgia, 30512. Entered as Second Class Matter as of Dec. 10, 1987 at the Post Office in Blairsville. NORTH GEORGIA NEWS is not responsible for errors in advertising beyond the cost of the actual space involved. All advertisements are accepted subject to the Publisher's approval of the copy and to the space being available, and the Publisher reserves the right to refuse any advertisement.

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