# COMMUNITY

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## A Tribute to Charles Mattox - Heaven is a Lot like Kentucky

### THE LUCKY ONES, AND THE CONCEPT OF DUTY

*Editor's Note: At the suggestion of many readers, we will be re-running Charles Mattox's columns within our publications. Follow along and enjoy his legendary work at capturing our local history.*

First published April 2, 2008

This week, Mr. Bond, our Publisher, assigned me to the position of regional news editor for the Robertson County News, The Carlisle Mercury and the Bath News Outlook.

I continue to learn and discover beautiful and wondrous things about the three county area I cover.

It is my duty to bring you the information that will have the greatest impact for you and provide you with 'need to know' information, dear reader.

Some do not comprehend the concept of duty, but it rules my world.

When I think of duty, I also think of accountability.

I believe that if you are in a position of accountability, especially if you are paid a salary that comes from taxpayer dollars, then you should expect to be held accountable.

I occasionally ask tough questions to a few folks in positions of accountability that don't like tough questions asked of them.

It is not the first time I have encountered the problem.

I've been around the block a time or two and I've seen the elephant, as the early settlers used to say.

Seeking and sharing the truth for the benefit of an entire community, rather than turning a blind eye to certain activity for the benefit of a select few, or catering to a select few, begets rewards and consequences.

I've seen corruption and deceit and the ugly side of human nature just the same as the good. I don't like corruption, especially blatant corruption or the misappropriation of taxpayers' money.

"You like to stir it up don't you, Charles?" A friend asked me the other day.

A smirk slid across my face and then faded.

I explained the dreaded task of latrine duty practiced in Southeast Asia by American soldiers in the 1960s and early 1970s.

It amounted to taking empty diesel fuel drums, which had been sawed in half and situated for receptacles in the field latrines. When they were full, those assigned to latrine duty had to empty the container. This was done, in a proper military manner, by pouring a little diesel fuel in and then stirring the contents while it burned away.

It's a time-tested method that works, but it was fading back in the early 1980s when I became a soldier.

If you lasted, it wouldn't.

When I think about it, I always think about my heroes.

Some were military men and I write about them from time to time.

None ever feared stirring it up when it was required.

I visit the grave of Confederate Infantry Officer. Lt. Lott Dudley Young in the Carlisle Cemetery, as often as I can.

He survived the American Civil War while serving with Company H, 4th Battalion, 1st Kentucky Infantry Brigade: The Orphan Brigade.

He was one of the lucky ones.

Most of his companions perished in the many battles the soldiers of the Orphan Brigade fought in. Young was buried with full military honors in his uniform. The Confederate Flag was placed in his left hand. The American Flag in his right hand, just as he had instructed his pallbearers in a written statement that he prepared a few years before his death.

Lt. Lott Dudley Young is one of my heroes.

For any of you who may be confused, I feel obligated to note that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., is another hero of mine. He stirred up the whole nation, and he was right, and the nation is now a better nation because of it, in my humble opinion, though I believe we've still got a long way to go to heal our racial wounds.

I lost another hero a few days ago.

Edward O'Neil of Barterville, also in Nicholas County, is no longer with us.

Ed was a faithful Marine who served honorably with Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 9th Regiment, 3rd Marine Division.

He survived the Battle of Guam and later survived the Battle of Iwo Jima.

He was one of the lucky ones.

He lost many friends on Guam and several of those who survived were later killed on Iwo Jima.

But Ed survived both battles, and he told me about it during a Jan. 28, 2006, interview at his home.

I had been writing about a young Marine, Franklin Sousley, another hero of mine, who was born and raised in Hilltop, among the rolling hills of Fleming County. Sousley is buried in Elizaville Cemetery. Sometimes I visit his grave on my way home from work, when I need to remind myself why I do what I do.

Ed had read columns that I'd written about Sousley and wanted to talk.

He sent me a letter that I received Jan. 4, 2006.

"I spent 44 days on Iwo Jima and was earlier in the invasion of Guam, and out of 60 men in our platoon, half were killed or wounded, but I was lucky," he wrote. "I am 83 –and-a-half-years old and have been living on the same farm (excluding my military service) since 1937."

He later invited me to that farm, and into his home to talk about his experiences on Iwo Jima, the tiny island where Sousley had helped Rene Gagnon, Harlon Block, Ira Hayes, Doc Bradley and Michael Strank raise an American Flag, and they had their photograph taken in the process as the battle raged around them. The photograph, taken by Ed Rosenthal, remains one of the most iconic and recognizable images in history, but Strank, Block and Sousley, never saw it.

They died on Iwo Jima before the battle was over. Hayes, Gagnon and Bradley survived the battle.

They were the lucky ones.

Below is a brief excerpt of my interview with Mr. O'Neil.

We talked all day. Many of the things he told me I will take to my grave without ever sharing.

They are simply too sorrowful and painful to speak or write of, and I don't think Mr. O'Neil would approve my sharing them. He trusted me and unburdened himself and seemed relieved when he stopped.

I won't betray his trust.

But I will share the following, and I sure do hope he looks down from Heaven with approval.

"I saw truckloads of dead bodies on Iwo Jima.

I saw truckloads of dead Marines.

Some were my friends. Their bodies were in all kind of shape; some were missing limbs, some rotten, some really nothing more than a few body parts.

Some nights our foxholes would fill up with rainwater, and you'd sit there all night, terrified, up to your neck in water, waiting for the Japanese to come for you.

My thoughts on Guam and later, especially on Iwo Jima, were the same. I was just thinking about surviving until the next day. The Japanese liked to attack at night. Many nights I rubbed mosquito lotion into my eyes to help me stay awake."

The freedom of the press is a freedom I hold dearly, and its one of the few things in my life that has been given to me on a silver platter. Just like all of my freedoms. Just like all of your freedoms: Freedoms that were paid for with blood. Blood spilled from Bunker Hill, Blue Licks and Baghdad, to Shiloh, Iwo Jima and Kabul. Blood spilled from folks who lived in Carlisle, Barterville and Hilltop, and folks who have in the past, and still today call Fleming, Bath, Nicholas and Robertson County, home, though they currently protect our freedoms abroad.

The freedom of the press is one I will never willingly compromise just because it makes a few folks uncomfortable when I ask tough questions or write painful truths. And though in every community there are those who seek to control information for personal gain, and some do this quite successfully, I do not condone or support that belief, nor do I believe my heroes would.

They understood that terrible, awful price that comes with freedom.

So do I.

Bath County Ambulance Service will be accepting sealed bids on the following:

- 2017 Chevy Ambulance
- Like-new Briggs and Straton Elite Generator
- 2003 Chevy Tahoe, runs and drives

Bidding will be separate on items. Label "Sealed Bid" on outside of envelop as to which item is bid for.
Bidding deadline is 11/30/26.
Bids should be turned in at EMS Station, 78 Rowland Avenue, Owingsville, or PO Box 381, Owingsville, KY 40360.

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COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY
CLAUDETTE FAUDERE
BATH COUNTY CIRCUIT CLERK

Notice of Final Settlements filed in Bath District Court:

NAME OF ESTATE: Bobbie M. Vanlandingham
NAME OF EXECUTOR/ADMINISTRATOR: Michelle Bradford Plank
DATE FILED: 10/22/26
Any exceptions to final settlements must be filed within 30 days from date said settlement was filed in Bath District Court.

NAME OF ESTATE: Clyde Alexander Jr.
NAME OF EXECUTOR/ADMINISTRATOR: Twana Hatton
DATE FILED: 11/22/26
Any exceptions to final settlements must be filed within 30 days from date said settlement was filed in Bath District Court.

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*This is the most magical time of the year*
*and we want to help celebrate it!*




Kentucky Proud

Kevin Boling
AUCTION & REAL ESTATE
606-748-2696
KEVIN BOLING - BROKER

LIVE IN PERSON AUCTION
FRIDAY NOVEMBER 27TH - 5:00PM
7327 MT CARMEL RD FLEMINGSBURG KY 41041
JAYCO MOTORHOME:2017 CHEVY PASSENGER VAN/2013 FORD PASSENGER VAN/FURNITURE/COLLECTIBLES/ & MORE!!
KEVIN BOLING AUCTION & REAL ESTATE



Friday November 27TH starting at 5:00PM Kevin Boling Auction & Real Estate will be conducting a LIVE IN PERSON ONLY AUCTION consisting of a 2017 Chevy Passenger Van/Jayco motor home (Less than 30,000 miles) 2013 Ford Passenger Van/Furniture/River Boat collectibles/Household Items/Christmas Decor/ Collectibles and more!! Keep watching for full listing and photos. Go to www.Auctionzip.com user ID 20528. Call Kevin at 606-748-2696 with any questions.

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