

# Towns County Herald

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Legal Organ of Towns County

Volume 78 Number 2

Thursday, January 10, 2008

Publication Number 635540

## Towns County signs Proclamation to honor the USS Georgia Submarine

In a ceremony held in Commissioner Kendall's office last week, Kendall signed a proclamation designating March 28, 2008 as USS Georgia Day.

"Bring the USS Georgia home" has echoed throughout the state for more than 14 years. Soon, the 560 foot trident submarine will be stationed at the naval submarine base at Kings Bay in Georgia.

Commissioner Kendall's office was full of active and retired members of the armed services as well as the mayors of Young Harris and Hiawassee to view the flag that will be placed on the USS Georgia when it goes back into service.

The USS Georgia was launched in 1982 as an Ohio

class nuclear powered fleet ballistic missile submarine and the third ship to bear the name of this state.

The keel laying ceremony was presided over by First Lady Rosalyn Carter and her initials can still be seen on the ship's hull.

After 18 years of faithful service to the U.S. Navy, the ship's faith was in jeopardy. The Nuclear Posture Review Committee determined that the Navy had too many nuclear submarines and the vessel was slated for salvage.

After re-engineering proved that the ship could be retrofitted to accommodate tomahawk missiles allowing enough room for a special operations platform. This con-

version happened over the last two years while the ship was docked in Norfolk.

The USS Georgia can carry a crew of 15 officers, 139 enlisted crew members and up to 66 Special Operations Forces for a sustained, long endurance deployment.

Chairman of the committee and of the events surrounding the return to service of the submarine is Sheila M. McNeill, past National President of the Navy League of the United States. Honorary chairman of the committee is Governor Sonny Perdue and the Honorary Committee is made up of present and former U.S. Senators from Georgia, former Governors, and current and former Georgia Congressmen.



Those at the ceremony from L-R: Stephen Smith, J.T. Wilson, Mayor Barbara Mathis, Commissioner Bill Kendall, Retired Navy Chief Bud Johnson, George Silver, Chris Swett, Max Flaig, Leon West, Mayor Dan Nichols and Carl Tilden. Photo by Carl Vanzura