

North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

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Purdie is more than a name on a Wall

By Charles Duncan
North Georgia News
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Veterans Day is almost upon us.

Today, we share the story of a fallen U.S. Marine, the son of a Union County native, and it's a story just making its rounds in our humble community.

A little over 49 years ago, U.S. Marine Cpl. Robert David Purdie was killed in August 1968 in Quang Tri Province, Vietnam. Cpl. Purdie is honored on Panel 47W, Line 52 of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

The 22-year-old Purdie's connection to Union County was living in California at the time of his death. His mother is Monteen Poteete Purdie,

who was born in the Ivy Log Community, the daughter of William Lowery Poteete and Opla Chapman Poteete.

The Poteete family moved to Catoctia when Monteen was an infant, but she always knew where she came from.

In May 2015, Monteen Poteete Purdie was recognized as the oldest living Gold Star Mother in the United States. A Gold Star Mother is a mother who lost sons or daughters in service of the United States Armed Forces.

She was pinned by U.S. Marine Corps brigadier Gen. James Burnam during a ceremony at her son's gravesite at Los Angeles National Cemetery.

Monteen, who is



Monteen Poteete Purdie

102 years young and living in Las Vegas, Nevada, still affectionately remembers her family's hero, as she still bears



Cpl. Robert David Purdie

the distinction of the title "eldest Gold Star Mother."

Cpl. Purdie was one of the first in his circle of friends

in Sherman Oaks, California, to join the U.S. military at a time when a lot of young men his age either were drafted or enlisted. Some dodged the war all together.

David Purdie was 20 years old when he joined the U.S. Marine Corps. He was killed at the age of 22 years old. His mother still ponders about the years of her son's life that were snuffed out in that far away land – the woman he never got to fall in love with, and the children he never got to raise.

The pangs of heartache still live in Cpl. Purdie's family, feelings still strong after more than 49 years. A boxful of photographs, letters and memories of Cpl. Purdie remain.

Today, Monteen is 102 years old, and she hasn't let advancing age hold her back. Carrying her own backpack, she's climbed the tallest mountain in the contiguous United States, and hiked 40 miles into the Sierra Nevada Mountains, again, carrying her own pack.

Monteen learned to speak Spanish in her 80s, and at the age of 88, she rafted down the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon. Five years ago, at the age of 97, she spent three weeks in Paris, France on an extended vacation.

Her greatest joy is waking up every single morning. An even greater joy will one day come, a son she still pines for on earth.

Local resident Eric England inducted into the Georgia Military Veterans Hall of Fame

News Special
North Georgia News

Local veteran Eric England will be joining the distinguished ranks of Zell Miller and 15 other Georgia veterans in the upcoming induction into the 2017 Class of the Georgia Military Veterans Hall of Fame on Nov. 4.

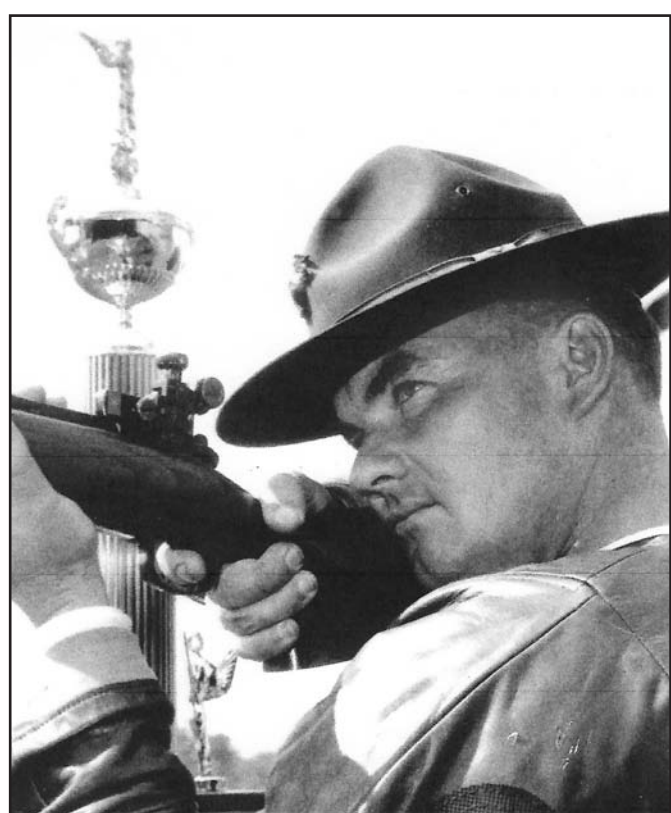
"I am deeply honored," said England, a retired master sergeant with the U.S. Marine Corps, after hearing the news.

England enlisted in the Marines in 1950 and faithfully carried out many duties for his country.

His career spanned several tours, including combat as a scout sniper in Vietnam, for which he currently holds the record as one of five American service members with the highest number of confirmed combat kills.

Also during the Vietnam War, Master Sgt. England's proficiency with a rifle earned him a job as a scout sniper and tactical weaponry instructor, and he trained his fellow patriots.

England has had a 24-year career on the USMC Rifle Team, winning national and international competitions.



Ret. US Marine Corps Master Sgt. Eric England

He holds several world marksman records, including the men's National Marksman Unit record at Fort Benning, Georgia, established in 1968.

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Board of Education honors Sheriff Mason with an award

By Lily Avery
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

During the Union County Board of Education regular meeting on Tuesday, Oct. 24, the board presented a Partner in Education Award and heard from the Union County 4-H students about the importance of the program.

This school year, the BOE and Union County Schools Superintendent Dr. Fred Rayfield have begun a new tradition in the school system by presenting a member, entity or organization with the Partner in Education Award.

A means to promote

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Union County Sheriff Mack Mason with Union County Schools Superintendent Dr. Fred Rayfield. Photo/Lily Avery

Blairsville Shop with a Cop getting ready for Christmas

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

No child should go without for Christmas, which is why the Blairsville Police Department is once more preparing for its annual Shop with a Cop outreach program.

Now in its 16th year, Blairsville Shop with a Cop organizers, including Union County Family Connection, can't wait to take Union County schoolchildren shopping for Christmas.

Last year, the Blairsville Police Department took 100 schoolchildren shopping thanks to the generous donations of kindhearted people in the community.

And this year, it all depends on the level of

See Shop with a Cop, Page 2A



Blairsville Police Chief Michael Baxter, Blairsville Police Chief Johnny Carroll and Blairsville Municipal Court Clerk Cindy Neely. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

Wreaths Across America campaign to honor veterans



Wreaths placed in memory of American veterans. Pictured here, Arlington National Cemetery. Photo/Facebook

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

National Wreaths Across America Day is coming up on Saturday, Dec. 16, and the local Knights of Columbus group at St. Francis of Assisi

Catholic Church is seeking wreath sponsors for veterans' graves.

The Knights of Columbus is the largest Catholic fraternal service organization in the world, and the local Assembly 2563 is taking donations now

in time to order the wreaths to be placed on the graves of veterans at the Georgia National Cemetery in nearby Canton on Dec. 16.

All told, the group is looking to raise enough money

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Honaker speaks on his two tours and duties in Vietnam

By Lily Avery
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

United States Army Veteran Bill Honaker shared insight on his time in the service and the many sacrifices that often accompany that service with the Union County Lions Club on Thursday, Oct. 26.

Honaker enlisted in the United States Army in 1962, served for 20 years, retiring in 1983 as a Master Sergeant. Of those many years in service, Honaker spent 17 of them in what is known as Memorial Activities or

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Vietnam Veteran Bill Honaker

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PANTHERS Football
Fri. Nov. 3 @ Lumpkin
County 7:30 PM
Country
Nov. 4 State Championships
@ Carrollton 9:30 AM

Daylight Saving Time Begins

Don't Forget To Set Your Clocks BACK an Hour

City of Blairsville Election Nov. 7th
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