

## Eric England...from Page 1A

The retired master sergeant has also represented his country by participating on two Olympic shooting teams.

Georgia Military Veterans Hall of Fame founder and President Col. Paul Longgear

(USA-Ret), of Pine Mountain, recently announced England's nomination.

"The framed photos of this year's 17 inductees, together with those of the 66 previously selected members, will

be prominently displayed on the Heroes Wall of the Floyd Building in the State Capitol complex," said Col. Longgear.

According to Col. Rick White (USA-Ret), chairman of the Hall of Fame's Board of Governors, nominees must have ties to Georgia and qualify in one of three categories: valor for heroic action in combat; outstanding achievement while in service; or significant local, state or national contributions after leaving active duty.

"This year's honorees will be inducted at the Fifth Annual Georgia Military Veterans Hall of Fame Ceremony and Banquet on Nov. 4 at St. Luke Ministry Center, 301 11th St. in Columbus," Col. White said. "This annual event is open to the public, and I encourage all interested Georgians to attend."

For reservation details, visitors may access the Hall of Fame website at <http://www.GMVHOF.org>.

## Active and Retired Federal Employees upcoming meeting

The National Association of Active and Retired Federal Employees will meet Tuesday, November 14 at 11:30 AM at the Circle J Steakhouse in Blue Ridge. The purpose of the meeting is to talk about reorganization, changes to benefits and health insurance. For more information, you may contact President Jim Veal at 706-455-6920.

## Board of Education...from Page 1A



Union County 4-H Senior Officers at the Oct. 24 regular board of education meeting. Photo/Lily Avery

unity between the school system and the community, this award will be presented monthly at the BOE meetings.

"In our business, the school business and running a school system, you always realize very quickly that there are certain entities, organizations and individuals that you depend on greatly to make things work safely and efficiently and make your life easier," said Dr. Rayfield. "Those are in every community that you want to go work in. And some of those relationships are really good, some of them are average and, to be honest with you, some of those relationships can be absolutely nonexistent and terrible."

"Thankfully that atmosphere does not exist in Union County. We have a tremendous group of leaders in our county to represent different governmental entities and organizations that, when we pick up the phone, we go to visit them, or we sit down to talk about the needs of the school district, they are very open to that."

"So, we decided this school year that each month we wanted to focus on and recognize a partner in education."

For the month of October, Union County Sheriff Mack Mason was selected as the recipient of the Partner in Education award on behalf of the Union County Sheriff's Office. According to Dr. Rayfield, Sheriff Mason and the Union County Sheriff's Office is an integral part of the school system and an entity that the school system can not only trust, but also rely on a regular basis to always keep the best interest of the school system in mind.

"This is someone who

is very valuable to what we do on a daily basis," said Dr. Rayfield. "This is someone who we have come to depend on and we value very highly in terms of what we call partnership and engagement in education."

"I certainly can think of no other entity that we should recognize first than the Union County Sheriff's Office and Sheriff Mack Mason."

Sheriff Mason personally accepted the award and thanked the BOE, Dr. Rayfield and all those involved in education in Union County for the honor and for continuing to provide Union County students with quality education and care.

"I really appreciate this, and I appreciate y'all," said Sheriff Mason. "The utmost importance to us is the safety of our school system, the children and faculty. We're committed to you and appreciate everything you do and enjoy working with you."

In other BOE news, Union County 4-H Coordinator Timothy Jennings, accompanied by the senior 4-H officers, shared his utmost gratitude to the BOE and to Dr. Rayfield for allowing the students to come and share their accomplishments, as well as for continuously supporting the students and the program.

"Thank you for allowing us to come here tonight and talk with you," said Jennings. "We just want to tell you a little bit about the program and all that we're doing and have done this year."

"We have a brief presentation for you to highlight what we do in extension and in 4-H. We're a partner in education and we're funded through the University of Georgia, through the Board of Education and we're also funded through the

Commissioner's Office.

"We appreciate your continued support."

Senior board 4-H President Elena Griggs took the reins of the presentation, explaining the various teams that are within 4-H, competitions in which these teams compete and why the 4-H program is such an essential program for Union County Schools.

"4-H has provided a lot of opportunities for students to get involved," said Griggs. "I think our numbers really do show that. In our Cloverleaf area, which is fourth through sixth grade, we have 710 students. That's quite a lot of people that we're trying to get involved young so that when they come up to high school, they have experience."

"Our Junior 4-H'ers, which are our middle schoolers, have 30 students and then Senior 4-H'ers, which is high school, consists of 21 students."

Griggs went on to highlight a few of the many afterschool activities that 4-H'ers in Union County can get involved in, including the BB Team, the Archery Team, the Skeet Team and public speaking.

As Griggs explained, each of these activities teaches the students to be safe in their sport, speak confidently and concisely in front of an audience and further support students to become successful members of society after graduation.

"Thank you for your generosity and support," said Griggs. "And for keeping our program going. We really, really appreciate it."

After the meeting, all BOE members and guests were treated to refreshments, courtesy of the Union County 4-H'ers.

## Shop with a Cop...from Page 1A

donations as to how many kids the police department will be able to take on Saturday, Dec. 9, though Blairsville Police Chief Johnny Carroll said that the goal is always to take as many children as they can.

Of course, the magic will happen that special Saturday when students make their way from the meeting place of Union County Middle School to Walmart in Blairsville, where they will shop with law enforcement volunteer chaperones, including members of the Blairsville Police Department and Union County Sheriff's Office.

The event is a chance for kids to spend some quality time with local law enforcement, and will go a long way to making sure that these children have special Christmases.

After all the shopping is through, the students will head back to the middle school, where they will be treated to lunch together before heading home with their presents.

Each child will also go home with a food basket for them and their families, courtesy of Fellowship of the Hills Church, and each child's family will also receive a gift card to a local grocery store, to make sure they have something on the table for Christmas.

One thing that always touches the hearts of those involved is when they see kids shopping for other members of their families because they want their mom, dad, brother, sister or grandparent to get something for Christmas, too.

"Just to see what these kids get and how they appreciate it ... it's just a great program," said Blairsville Municipal Court Clerk Cindy Neely, adding that the program is a blessing for all involved.

For folks wanting to make a donation to a good cause for Christmas, visit Neely during the week at the Blairsville Police Department, which is around back of the City Hall building in Downtown Blairsville.

"We've appreciated the community's help in the past,



For years, Shop with a Cop has been a time for law enforcement and Union County schoolchildren to bond over Christmas, as pictured in this photo from 2015. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

and we'd certainly appreciate it again," said Blairsville Assistant Police Chief Michael Baxter. "There's no doubt there's a need there, and without help, we can't make this happen."

Continued Baxter: "The money goes into an account just for this. The money is never touched at all except for Shop with a Cop."

People looking to refer children for Shop with a Cop can contact Katy Jones with Union County Family

Connection at (706) 835-4351.

For more details about Union County Family Connection, visit the website at [union.gafcp.org](http://union.gafcp.org).

"Our Family Connection collaborative brings together partners from various community agencies and organizations in order to help plan strategies to improve the lives of students and families," according to the UC Family Connection website.