

North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

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Anceberry Burnette, 93, recalls time as a POW

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Editor

World War II Army Veteran Anceberry Burnette is 93 years old, but he remembers this time as a German prisoner of war like it was yesterday.

Burnette took part in the Allied invasion of Italy at Salerno in 1943, but it wasn't until after D-Day and the establishment of beachheads at Normandy that the Germans captured him and 64 of his fellow soldiers in nearby Le Havre, France, in 1944.

"They took us prisoner and hiked us on the pavement, marched us seven days and nights," said Burnette. "That's rougher than hiking out there in the woods. Getting on the pavement, it ruins your feet."

The American prisoners suffered extreme hardship during those long days and

the boxcar containing the 65 Americans. Fortunately, no one was hurt in that initial bombardment, but Burnette decided that they should try their hands at escaping.

It was about 3:45 a.m. according to his watch, heading toward sunrise, and he knew they didn't have much time to make their getaway.

None of the remaining prisoners wanted to go with Burnette, however, as all felt confident that the tide of the war had turned and that they would soon be liberated.

Choosing to go it alone, Burnette climbed atop his sergeant's shoulders, who raised him up to squeeze out of a small air vent at the top of the car as the train trudged slowly up the tracks.

"When I hit the ground, See Burnette, Page 6A

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World War II POW Anceberry Burnette, center, at Union County War Memorial Park with his son Benny and his grandson Shane, all U.S. Army Veterans. Photo by Shawn Jarrard

Bob Head remembered for generosity, leadership

News Special
North Georgia News

Robert "Bob" Head Jr., a pillar of the Blairsville community, passed away at the age of 79 on June 6.

A memorial service was held in his honor on June 9 inside the sanctuary of First United Methodist Church of Union County.

Pastor Mark Burgess officiated the service, and both Bud Akins and Jimmy Tallent shared special memories of their longtime friend.

Their messages centered on common themes of quiet strength and leadership,

but most of all humility, as they touched on his years of service and generosity in the community he loved.

Those who knew him well understood that Head was quick to listen and slow to speak – a man of faith who leaned on God and applied Biblical principles in all aspects of his life.

He graduated from Union County High School in 1957, and from Young Harris College in 1959, before going on to earn a master's degree in Business

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Bob Head

Billy Poteete leaves behind a lasting local legacy

News Special
North Georgia News

Community leader and native son William "Billy" Nelson Poteete of Poteete Creek Road in Blairsville passed away at the age of 82 on June 7.

Born Aug. 20, 1935, to the late Ulius Poteete and the late Ina Mae Davenport Poteete, Billy was a lifelong resident of Union County.

Poteete was a very patriotic American who loved his country. He was drafted and served two years in the U.S. Army and was later recalled during the Berlin Crisis.

He and his wife Barbara

owned and operated Poteete's General Store for over 30 years, and he drove a Union County school bus for more than 35 years.

His contributions to the community extended also to the safety and well-being of his fellow Union Countians, as he headed up the volunteer Union County Fire Station No. 4 for nearly two decades.

Poteete was a member of Dooly Masonic Lodge #367 F&AM and Mt. Zion Baptist Church, both of which he helped to support over the years.

A family man through and through, Poteete was a See Poteete, Page 3A



Billy Poteete

DDA, Cockerham sign contract for Haralson parcel

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Editor

Good news, Blairsville residents and business owners – the development of the old Haralson Property is moving right along.

In a called meeting of the Blairsville Downtown Development Authority on Tuesday, June 5, the DDA Board approved a contract with local entrepreneur Steve Cockerham.

Negotiations have been ongoing between the DDA and Cockerham for over a year, and Cockerham will be purchasing one of the four land lots available on the Haralson Property Development behind

Blairsville City Hall.

Cockerham plans to construct a multiuse, three-story building directly across from Foodland Grocery in Downtown Blairsville.

The building's top two stories will face Pat Haralson Memorial Drive, with a third, lower story accessible from behind the building on level with the downtown parking lot.

Furthermore, the upcoming structure will be designed to accommodate up to eight new businesses on the lower and middle floors, plus downtown living spaces in its uppermost floor.

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Steve Cockerham in the June 5 regular meeting of the Blairsville City Council. Photo by Mark Smith

Auditors give thumbs up to City of Blairsville finances

By Mark Smith
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

The City of Blairsville has received a clean bill of financial health after its latest audit, the results of which were presented at the June 5 regular meeting of the Blairsville City Council.

Clay Pilgrim of accounting firm Rushton & Company led the presentation of the city's 2017 Annual Financial Report and Audit.

"Things did go well during the audit process, especially for a first-year audit," said Pilgrim. "I'm a new face. We are a new auditor for 2017. Sometimes, the first year of an audit does not go as smooth as

the second, third, and fourth and fifth.

"I'm very pleased with all your finance staff – really helpful in helping us complete the audit."

Pilgrim went on to say that he was happy to be able to present an unmodified, or clean, opinion concerning the audit, adding that all the city's finances checked out okay for 2017.

In his department head report, Blairsville Police Chief Johnny Carroll said HB 673, signed into law by Gov. Nathan Deal on May 2, will go into effect on July 1. The bill is meant to restrict the See Audit, Page 2A



Clay Pilgrim of Rushton & Company, the city's auditing firm, in the June 5 regular meeting of the Blairsville City Council. Photo by Mark Smith

Bentley flying high at elite military training

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Editor

Hometown patriot Tsali D. Bentley II is, at this very moment, training with the best pilots in all the world for the protection of America and her allies.

U.S. Air Force 2nd Lt. Bentley is part of the Euro-NATO Joint Jet Training program, or ENJJPT, at Sheppard Air Force Base in Texas.

Only 40 to 45 of the roughly 1,000 cadets graduating each year from the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado are selected for ENJJPT, which is "the world's only multi-nationally manned and managed flying training program chartered to produce combat pilots for NATO," according to Sheppard AFB.

"It's a unique opportunity to train with some of our allies, to learn how to fly and eventually be in the good fight with them one day," said Bentley. "We start out on the T-6, and it is

a turboprop airplane, 1,100 horsepower, a pretty powerful plane. We'll be in that for six months.

"And then, we will transition to the T-38, and that is the first jet trainer we fly in. In a dive, it can go up to supersonic. Both of them have ejection seats, so they're pretty high-performance airplanes in which we get to train to prepare us for hopefully one day flying either the F-16, F-15, or F-35, F-22, the F-117, or that."

Bentley started ENJJPT last month, on May 22, and he hopes to earn the assignment of a lifetime as a fighter jet pilot when he finishes the 18-month training, which will come with a minimum commitment of 10 years to serve in the U.S. Air Force.

Regardless of his assignment, Bentley said he'll be happy knowing he's serving his country.

"Ultimately, no matter what you fly, it's all about doing the best you can in that mission, in that airframe, and then going See Bentley, Page 3A



U.S. Air Force 2nd Lt. Tsali D. Bentley II

Union SWAT helps end Fannin manhunt

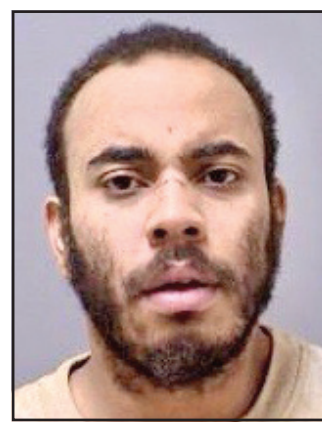
By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Editor

Several members of the Union County Sheriff's Office SWAT Team aided in the June 5 arrest of a man on the lam in Fannin County, according to the sheriff's office.

The manhunt began that Tuesday morning, when first responders received a call about a man with a gun allegedly making threats against a woman familiar to him outside a Fannin County recreational facility, according to authorities.

That man was Kenneth Otis Bethea Jr., and he was wanted out of Cherokee County, Georgia, on warrants for attempted carjacking and an earlier domestic dispute, according to authorities.

What ensued was a multiagency manhunt and subsequent arrest involving deputies and officers from Fannin, Cherokee, Pickens and Union counties, according to authorities. At press time, Bethea was



Kenneth Otis Bethea Jr.

being held without bond at the Cherokee County Adult Detention Center on more than a dozen charges, according to authorities.

The Union County Sheriff's Office enjoys a close working relationship with many neighboring law enforcement agencies, and Sheriff Mack Mason said he was more than happy to have been of assistance in the timely arrest of the fleeing suspect.

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Blairsville Pro RODEO

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at Brasstown Bald

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