## Retired U.S. Army Maj. Leon Davenport will be missed



Leon and Barbara Davenport share the major's Quilt of Valor, which he received in March of 2014.

## **By Charles Duncan Towns County Herald** Editor

Most people only know Leon Davenport as the retired administrator of Union General Hospital.

Davenport, 90, who died last Thursday, was the most decorated war veteran in Union County history. He also is the namesake of the Veterans Building off Georgia Highway 515 in Blairsville.

Funeral services were held on Monday, Jan. 9, at Blairsville First Baptist Church, with Dr. Fred Lodge officiating. Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris and family friend John Gambino also spoke at the service.

Davenport will be interred in Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, Virginia. Arrangements have been entrusted to the care of Cochran Funeral Home and Crematory of Blairsville.

Retired U.S. Army Maj. Leon Davenport, a Union County native, is one of the most decorated veterans in U.S. Military history, and without a doubt, the most decorated soldier in Union County history.

Davenport began his military career as a U.S. Army private in 1944 and rose through the ranks to major, receiving a battlefield commission in Korea in 1953.

During his 22-year military career, Davenport served 131 months overseas, being stationed in the Philippine Islands (1945), Japan (1945-1950), Korea (1950-1951 and 1952-1953), Germany (1962-1965) and Vietnam (1968-1969).

He was a member of the Davenport. famed 24th Infantry Division, the first American unit to see enport and Barbara Hooper action during the Korean Conflict. During the course of his military career, Davenport was awarded three Silver Stars, one Bronze Star with V for Valor, one Bronze Star for Meritorious Service, a Purple Heart, an Air Medal with Nine Oak Leaf clusters, an Army Commendation Medal with Oak Leaf cluster, an American Campaign Medal, Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal, Philippine Liberation Medal, World several grandparents before

of Occupation Medal (Japan 1945-1950), National Defense Service Medal, Korean Service Medal with Nine Battle Stars, United Nations Korea Service Medal, Republic of Korea Service Medal, a Vietnamese Order of Gallantry with Star, Vietnamese Service Medal with three Battle Stars and the Combat Infantry

Badge Commissioner Paris said Davenport will always be remembered as the greatest decorated war veteran in Union County history.

"He was a true hero and someone we could all look up to and be proud of," Paris said. "Anytime you would see Mr. Davenport, he would have a smile on his face and would make you think you were the most important person in the world when he was speaking to you. He and the legacy of his family in Union County is tremendous.

"Once Leon retired back to Union County, he then spent the rest of his working life helping to make Union General Hospital the best rural hospital in Georgia," Paris said. 'We are very blessed to have his family living in our county and carrying on the legacy of such a special person that we are all so very proud to know and call our own. We will miss you, Maj. Leon Davenport, and never forget you."

Davenport shares one wall at the Blairsville Restaurant with two other highly decorated Union County war veterans, Evan Legg and the late Larry Prather.

Davenport was born in Union County on Dec. 9, 1926, to John Prescott Davenport and Ethel Lee Souther as a Deacon, later as Deacon Emeritus, for many years.

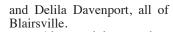
Upon his retirement from military service in August 1972, Maj. Davenport assumed the position of Administrator of Union General Hospital in Blairsville.

'Mr. D.," as he is still affectionately known by current and former hospital/nursing home staff, remained as administrator of the facility until his retirement in 1993. Davenport always gave credit for the growth and success of the facilities to members of the hospital authority, medical staff and employees.

Davenport has been a faithful member of many civic and patriotic organizations, such as the American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Purple Heart Association, the 3rd Infantry Division Association, the 24th Infantry Division Association, the 1st Cavalry Association, the 14th Armored Cavalry Association and the Retired Officer's Asation.

He was also a member of Allegheny Lodge No. 114 F & AM, and an active member of the Shriner's organization while stationed in Kentucky.

Surviving him is his wife of 63 years, Barbara; daughter and son-in-law, Cayce and David Friedly; and son and daughter-in-law, Douglas

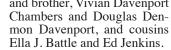


half-staff.

Also surviving are nieces Sydney C. Vandiver, Laurie C. Shelnut, Beth T. Wright, and Barbara C. Twiggs; nephew Matthew Chambers and great-nephew Carter Wright.

Other survivors include: cousins Charles Jenkins, Marilvn J. Thomasson, Kenneth Jenkins, and Patricia J. Chambers, and longtime family friend and caretaker Martha Deavers.

Preceding Maj. Davenport in death were his sister



These seven flagpoles were installed and dedicated at the Maj. Leon Davenport Veterans

Center in July 2016. Following Davenport's death last Thursday, the flags were lowered to

The following gentlemen served as pallbearers: Billy Decker, Roy Hamby, Jimmy Hooper, Wesley Hop good, Hoyt Raper, James Kirk Smith and Terry Wright.

Requested to serve as honorary pallbearers were: the "Jesse" Sunday School Class of Blairsville First Baptist Church, Rev. Bethel Buch-

and brother, Vivian Davenport anan, Bobby Ellis, Joe Gray, Charles Jenkins, Carlton Colwell, Zell Miller, Bud Akins, Kenneth Jenkins, Billy Johnson, D.L. Martin, James Postell, and members of all local veterans associations.

In lieu of flowers, the family requested memo-

rial contributions be made to Blairsville First Baptist Church, Union General Hospital Auxiliary or Union County Nursing Home Activities Department.



Barbara and Leon Davenport with close family friend and fellow veteran Roy Hamby during the November 11, 2015, Veterans Day Ceremony at the First United Methodist Church.



Blairsville's own U.S. Army Maj. (Ret.) Leon Davenport passed away on Thursday, Jan. 5. Here is Davenport in April of 2013, with wife Barbara and daughter Cayce, during the ceremony in which the Veterans Building became his namesake

On Sept. 18, 1953, Dav-Twiggs were united in marriage at the home of the bride's grandparents, Dr. and Mrs. James L. Hooper Sr. in Hiawassee.

Their marriage has been an inspiration to others both here and abroad. Christ was placed at the head of their family since its inception. Both Leon and Barbara have been longtime, faithful members of First Baptist Church of Blairsville, as were their parents and War II Victory Medal, Army them. Leon served faithfully

## Health board meets new District 2 director



Steve Holmes and the rest of the Towns County Board of Health met new District 2 Public Health Director Dr. Pamela Logan in a called meeting last week. Dr. Logan recently took over as District 2 director from Dr. David Westfall.

## By Lily Avery **Towns County Herald** Staff Writer

YOUNG HARRIS -The Towns County Board of Health held a called meeting on Thursday, Jan. 5, in the 911 Conference Room to discuss upcoming accounting and employee matters with new District 2 Public Health Director Dr. Pamela Logan.

A primary point of discussion during the meeting was the proposition of moving the business of accounting from the local office to the district level.

As of right now, of the 13 counties in the district, Towns County is only one of two doing all in-house accounting, something Logan advices against due to the hours it takes away from personnel productivity in the office.

During FY 2016, the allocation for accounting See Health, Page 3B