

Davenport...from Page 1A



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.

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 famed 24th Infantry Division, the first American unit to see 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 War II Victory Medal, Army 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 Davenport.

On Sept. 18, 1953, Davenport and Barbara Hooper Twigg were united in marriage at the home of the bride's grandparents, Dr. and Mrs. James L. Hooper Sr. in Hiwassee.

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 several grandparents before them. Leon served faithfully 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 Association.

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 and Delila Davenport, all of Blairsville.

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

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

Preceding Maj. Davenport in death were his sister and brother, Vivian Davenport Chambers and Douglas Denmon Davenport, and cousins Ella J. Battle and Ed Jenkins.

The following gentlemen served as pallbearers: Billy Decker, Roy Hamby, Jimmy Hooper, Wesley Hopgood, 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 Buchanan, Bobby Ellis, Joe Gray, Charles Jenkins, Carlton Colwell, Zell Miller, Bud Akins, Kenneth Jenkins, Billy



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

Johnson, D.L. Martin, James Postell, and members of all local veterans associations.

In lieu of flowers, the

family requested memorial contributions be made to Blairsville First Baptist Church, Union General Hospital

Auxiliary or Union County Nursing Home Activities Department.