Payne...from Page 1A his people.

Being chaplain was about more than just ministering for Payne, who took it upon himself to entertain his soldiers through conversation, by creating a library, and in organizing singing groups, to include a traveling Christmas caroling troupe complete with lights and festive cheer.

The dedicated chaplain was constantly thinking of new ways to inspire the men and boost their morale. Even little things, like carrying a variety of meals to trade with others to stave off the boredom of eating the same food all the time, were a big deal to the soldiers.

He also understood that maintaining healthy relationships stateside was an integral part of spiritual sustenance, and he regularly counseled soldiers on family matters, making sure to keep the home front top of mind as often as possible, encouraging, for example, troops to donate to the Toys for Tots Christmas initiative for spouses to participate in back home.

His talents at monitoring and elevating soldier confidence were relied upon by the top brass, too, with Gen. Barry McCaffrey – who personally awarded Payne the Bronze Star Medal for leadership during Operation Desert Storm regularly seeking his opinion on improving quality of life for troops.

And having served 20 of his 26 years in the Army as part of the chaplaincy, Payne got plenty of opportunities to improve the lives of soldiers by ministering to and counseling them, including three years in the Republic of Korea, though he was likely needed most during his time in Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Kuwait amid the Gulf War of the early '90s.

In describing their friend to the Hall of Fame, Edwards and Pope detailed Payne as both a "Super Chaplain" and a highly trained American soldier; an advocate of families and veterans; and an excellent listener, counselor and preacher to soldiers both on and off the battlefield.

"He always had a smile on his face and a good word to say for the Troopers," Pope wrote of their service together. "He broke the monotony of preparing and waiting for action, in bringing God, humor, comfort, and even different chow to the lives he could affect positively.

"This is leadership, applied across all domains. He learned that leadership from his upbringing, but he accredited his OCS and infantry time as refining his skills and imparting the strong desire to help. This is what made him a standout from all the other chaplains; he

a chaplain but also on the overall picture of the man's life, which he devoted to serving his country and others.

"There is much more that he has done in his life than the examples spelled out here," Edwards wrote. "Yet, whatever additional examples we might give, they were for the same reason and due to the same impetus.

"He loves soldiers and those interested in bettering themselves. He is always ready and willing, and very able to provide whatever assistance they need, or to just quietly walk along beside them and listen.

"(Payne) has proven his preaching and walks the walk with ease. And he gives credit where it is due: to his God, to his upbringing, and to U.S. Army Officer Candidate School, all of which make him stand out above the rest."

Over the course of his life, God, country and family have remained central to Payne's figuring. Subsequently, he has been able to serve all three to such a high degree because they have been there in return, every step of the way.

This November will mark 56 years since he married his high school sweetheart Jo at age 18, after which he attended college, enlisted in the Army, enrolled in Officer Candidate School, graduated in 1970 and stayed on at OCS in an infantry training role.

As one of a long line of Paynes to have served in the military since the time of the Revolutionary War – including current active duty Paynes joining up made sense to Dan, though he credits God for guiding him in all he has

He served for about six years during the Vietnam Era, earning an honorable discharge as a 1st lieutenant infantry officer before moving on to the private sector and going to work as a successful carpet salesman.

Having always loved the outdoors and being particularly proficient at fishing, Payne managed to take on several sponsorships to fish in the professional circuit, allowing him to leave his sales job to pursue pro bass fishing.

His fishing career only lasted a couple of years, because it was in this time of his life that he began to feel the tug of a higher calling. So, he traded in his fishing rod for the Holy Bible

"One day, I came home and said, 'I'm going to sell all my fishing tackle, anything to do with fishing, and I'm going to go serve the Lord," Payne said. "And that's when I went to seminary.'

From 1978 to 1981,

North Carolina before moving back to Georgia and leading a church in Cedartown. 'It was during that time

I really felt like the Lord was nudging me to a different type of ministry, and that was the military ministry," Payne said.

He had been out of the military for almost a decade at that point and was nearly at the top of the age limit to return to active duty; fortunately, he was able to get the ball rolling in 1985 by signing up with the Army Reserve as a Chaplain Candidate.

His infantry experience and time as an OCS tactical officer gave him the edge he needed to transition out of the reserves and into the Army proper, where Payne was selected to serve as Chaplain for the Advanced Individual Training battalion of the Army's Academy of Health Sciences.

Next, he went on to serve as line battalion chaplain in Korea, advancing after three tours there to Cavalry Squadron Chaplain and placement in Edwards' squadron about a month before Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait in summer 1990, in the lead-up to Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm.

It was during Desert Storm that renowned news anchor Dan Rather traveled to the Middle East and interviewed Payne just before Thanksgiving one year about life near the frontlines and what he and the Army were doing to keep spirits up during the holidays.

Payne also performed chaplain duties for the U.S. Embassy in Kuwait, and after leaving the Middle East, continued his military career with other troop units at Fort Hood, Fort Benning, Redstone Arsenal, a return to Kuwait at Camp Doha, Korea again, then at Fort Gordon before finally retiring, at which time he was awarded the Legion of Merit.

In retirement, he would go on to serve with the National Park Service as a volunteer and paid seasonal ranger at parks between Alaska and Georgia

from the Great Smoky Mountains to Yellowstone and he conducted mission work all over the globe.

Locally, he has ministered to former military members and their families by volunteering for psychologically therapeutic Appalachian Trail hikes, helping participants deal with mental health issues such as post-traumatic stress disorder, with which Payne struggles himself.

A Catoosa County native, Payne has traveled to locales all over the world thanks to his military career and spirit of volunteering, all while raising a family of children and foster children with his wife Jo.

Their love of the great outdoors and desire to stay close to home in Georgia inspired them to move to the mountains



Chaplain Payne led this service at the conclusion of Operation Desert Storm, during which everyone present expressed gratitude to God for the success of their mission. Photo/Submitted

his unyielding faith have contributed greatly to Pavne's effectiveness as a chaplain, both in wartime and during peace, such that the impressions he has made on those turning to him in their times of need have been nothing short of indelible.

determination coupled with endorsement than this to superior meritorious service to recommend (Chaplain) Dan. me and to the Troopers of my L. Payne, an American Soldier, to the (Hall of Fame)," Pope wrote. "I read the criteria you use to determine suitability for the OCS Hall of Fame.

'He may not have made Colonel or been awarded a Medal of Honor or Distinguished "I cannot give a higher Service Cross, but he exhibited

squadron in the most trying environment.

"The troopers I still maintain contact with all still talk about Chaplain Payne. They, too, deserve to have his name on your wall of honor."

See Related Story on 6B



was a trained soldier, first and foremost.

For his part, Edwards chose to focus the nomination not only on Payne's time as

Payne attended Southeastern **Baptist Theological Seminary** in Wake Forest, North Carolina. Following graduation, he served as a pastor for a small church in



Retired Army Chaplain Dan Payne got a particularly warm reception from his wife Jo upon returning home from a deployment to Saudi Arabia during the Gulf War. Photo/Submitted

of Blairsville in 2005 after he retired from the Army. In addition to being awarded the Bronze Star Medal and Legion of Merit, Payne

is also the recipient of the Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal and many more accolades besides for his more than two decades of service to his country.

For all these things, the chaplain said there are two things specifically he wants people to know about him: "I love the Lord and I love my country. And I showed that love by serving in the military."

Payne is a cancer survivor, though he's currently battling a recurrence. He is pursuing promising avenues for treatment, and he doesn't let it get him down too much, saying, "Until you draw your last breath, there's hope."

This spirit of positive

ESS...from Page 1A

zip ties before making off with Daren Osborn said at the time. "an undisclosed amount of U.S. currency," according to police and local reporting.

"Hess conspired to commit the burglary with two other males who were armed with semi-automatic handguns," Lexington PD said.

Coinciding with his Jan. 31 arrest, Hess was also served his fugitive warrant out of Union County, Georgia, and a probation violation warrant. He remains in custody in North Carolina on greater than \$1 million bond, according to local reporting. The other two suspects in the case have also been arrested.

In Union County, Hess is wanted in connection with a 2017 home invasion for which his alleged accomplice, Deborah Hill, 41, of China Grove, North November 2017, according to court records.

the home invasion occurred following a visit from Hill with her two juvenile children to the 2017, Union County Sheriff's Lt. to court documents.

Dispatch received a call from second degree; robbery by force; the victim's residence in Union County, Osborn said.

When authorities arrived, they found the home's resident, an elderly man in a state of degree; and four counts making dementia, secured to a chair with duct tape, hooded and taped around the throat, and severely beaten in an attempt to extort money from him, Osborn said.

During the investigation, it was determined that Hill had been in the area about a month prior to the home invasion and had managed to secure thousands of dollars from her father's bank account, Osborn said.

Hess and Hill were arrested shortly after the crime and indicted together in April of 2017, though only Hill has Carolina, pleaded guilty in received a disposition in the case.

As part of her plea deal, As previously reported, Hill received a sentence of 20 years to serve five, which means can't hide - sooner or later, she will serve five years in prison and the remainder of her home of her father on Feb. 21, sentence on probation, according

Hess has been charged Two hours later, 911 locally with home invasion in the aggravated assault; three counts burglary in the first degree; false imprisonment; four counts cruelty to children in the third a false statement, according to court records.

> Following his February 2017 arrest for the crime, Hess spent a year and a half in the Union County Jail before bonding out on his charges in August of 2018. A judge issued a bench warrant for Hess' arrest when he failed to appear in court, and investigators began the hunt that has now come to an end.

> Obsorn said it's likely Hess will be called to account for his charges in North Carolina before he returns to face his charges in Georgia, adding that he's relieved to see Hess back in law enforcement custody.

> "You can run, but you it's going to catch up to you," Osborn said.

New **Customers**:

We are offering you a Buy 500/Get 500 on your first order of full color **business cards** OR your first order of black & white 2 Part Invoices

Call Allison or Kenneth for details 706-745-6343 **266 Cleveland Street** in the same building as the **North Georgia News** westprinting@windstream.net



lustomers Orde	er No		Phone			
Aute	20					
lastomer						
ny, suae, zip						
Sold By	Cash	C.O.D.	Charge	On Acct.	Mdsc. Ret	d Paid Ou
John Dy	Cam	0.040.	Charge	On Meet.	muse. rec	" Faid Ou
Quan.		Description				Amount
				-		-
						-
						-
All claims and	returned mode	MUST be accomm	anied by this hill		TAX	
All claims and returned goods MUST be accompanied by this bill TAX TOTAI						