

Davenport...from Page 1A

the occupation forces until a conflict broke out on the neighboring Korean peninsula in June of 1950.

He served with the famed 24th Infantry Division during the conflict that has never officially ended, only halted by a cease-fire being agreed upon by all sides in July 1953.

Davenport was given a Battlefield Commission during the Korean Conflict, which after the Vietnam War, these appointments became nearly non-existent due to stricter U.S. Army regulations.

The bottom line is, he had one tour during the (Korean) War, and when he came home to Fort Benning, he had a friend who had a family and the idea of getting sent to Korea scared him to death and he didn't want to go. So Davenport volunteered to take his place and go back to Korea.

From 1955 to 1962, Davenport served in the Army Reserves until he decided to return to active duty in 1962 during the Berlin crisis.

In 1961, the Soviet Union began construction of the Berlin Wall, separating East and West Berlin. When Davenport arrived, the Soviets were in the process of turning the Berlin Wall from a wire fence to the actual concrete wall that stood until 1990.

Davenport remained in West Germany until 1972, when he was sent back to Southeast Asia as an advisor during the Vietnam War.



Leon Davenport is surrounded by friends and family during his Quilt of Valor presentation on March 5th.

He retired from the U.S. Army in 1972, with 21 years of active service, having served a total of 131 months overseas.

Davenport is Union County's most highly decorated soldier. He earned numerous decorations and awards, including three Silver Stars, the Bronze Star with V Device, Purple Heart, Air Medal with nine Oak Leaf Clusters, the Presidential Unit Citation and the Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Bronze Star.

Following the Quilt of Valor presentation, Davenport

was surprised with the presentation of a plaque, which will be permanently displayed at the Major Leon Davenport Veterans Building off Georgia 515 in Blairsville.

Alvin Dyer of VFW Post 7394 made the plaque presentation.

The plaque is a collage of the military achievements of Davenport, including pictures illustrating his induction into the military, the presentation of two of his three Silver Stars and his battlefield promotion in Korea.

It also lists his military

Seized...from Page 1A

Ford, of Murphy, NC came through with the highest bid to purchase that car, providing a new patrol car worth approximately \$26,000, and paying an additional \$19,000 in cash for the seized car.

The courts also just awarded the department \$32,300 from two drug-seizure cases. That's a total of almost \$80,000 awarded in 2014.

Since taking office last year, Sheriff Mason has used \$57,850 in drug seizure funds and bartered trades, to turn over two-thirds of his patrol car fleet. The previous vehicles all had more than 100,000 miles on each vehicle and in some instances, 200,000 miles.

The county purchased another eight vehicles last year to make up the 24-vehicle fleet, Sheriff Mason said.

"It was approximately \$12,000 that had to come out of the budget to buy all these ve-

hicles (16) with the exception of the new vehicles," Sheriff Mason said. "We've acquired these vehicles through trades of assets - seized vehicles and drug seizure money.

"We had to make these transactions because the majority of our fleet was worn out, in disrepair and spent more time in the garage than on the road," Sheriff Mason said.

Sheriff Mason has stuck with Ford Crown Victorias as the department's patrol vehicle of choice. In doing so, he has been able to purchase low mileage patrol cars that other departments are moving away from because Ford Motor Company discontinued the Crown Victoria model.

He also has been able to outfit the vehicles at no charge because departments are donating the equipment - light bars, cages and other patrol vehicle accessories to the Sheriff's Office.

"Many departments have equipment they cannot use, equipment that won't fit on their new patrol cars," Sheriff Mason said.

"Items that only fit a Crown Vic are useless to these departments," Sheriff Mason said, adding that many thanks go to Cherokee, Murray and Banks counties, as well as the Georgia State Patrol for assisting with their surplus equipment. "Agencies that have a larger budget have the ability to help smaller departments."

Last year, the Sheriff's Office budget was hit with numerous repair costs that won't be seen in 2014.

"Last year, we had to deal with those repair costs because we had to make due with what we had," Sheriff Mason said. "Going forward this year, we're rid of all our mechanical nightmares. This year, the repair costs should be way down and taxpayers will breathe a little easier."

Perfect...from Page 1A

ly accurate as he tallied 11 strikeouts.

A mix of surgical accuracy, pin-point breaking pitches, and good old fashioned heat, kept the Patriots off balance and off the bases.

When the opposition was able to put a bat on the ball, it was off the end of the bat or they were jammed with a tailing fastball in on the hands.

Then when it seemed an Oglethorpe grounder had managed to find its way toward a hole, a Panther infielder was there to vacuum up the would-be base hit.

Everett forced eight grounders and two pop outs, but none were as dramatic as the first out of the seventh inning.

Patriots speedy lead off hitter Tevin Glenn smacked a grounder into the hole between shortstop and third, but junior third baseman Jackson Burks dove to his left, snagged the grounder and from his knees, fired a one-hopper to first baseman Joseph Mancuso.

Burks' web gem not only robbed the Patriots of a base runner, but kept his pitcher on a collision course with history and baseball immortality.

"It's one of the best plays that I have ever seen and is something that will be talked about forever," Panther Head Coach Brandon Bradburn said. "Their lead off guy was a lefty and really fast, and he hit the ball in the hole and Jackson completely laid out for it. He didn't have time to get up to his feet so he threw a perfect one hopper across the diamond from his knees and Mancuso dug it out. It was sort of a bang-bang play, but after he made that play, and obviously I wouldn't have ever said this out loud, but I knew he had the perfect game. It was just destiny after that play."

Everett retired the next two batters and the celebration ensued. Remarkably, he only faced one three-ball count during the entire contest.

Following a pop out and a strikeout in the top half of the first, Everett's full count offering sat Jared Robertson down, looking at strike three.

From that point on, Everett was in the zone. With each out, momentum began to build for the Purple and Gold, and when the dust settled, the Panthers came out on top 7-0 in Game Two of the twinbill, reclaiming the tiebreaker over Oglethorpe in a must-win game.

After losing 6-2 to the Patriots in game one, Union couldn't afford to drop to 0-2 in Region 8-AA play, so Coach Bradburn confidently gave the ball to his senior ace, and Everett did more than just rise to the occasion.

He rose to an entirely different stratosphere, completely untouchable by the best that Oglethorpe County had to offer.

"There was a little bit of fire that carried over from the first game and his first pitch was a strike," Coach Bradburn said. "He was going right after them and they weren't even sniffing it. He was blowing it by them and by the fourth inning he had already went through their lineup and was on a roll after that."

Everett claims that it was during the third inning when he finally found his groove, and while he didn't realize he had a perfect game until the fifth inning, he was more focused on preventing the Patriots from escaping with the sweep.

"It was very important that we respond after losing the first game and stay up to avoid being swept," Everett said. "I knew I was on my game around the third inning

but I didn't realize that I was throwing a perfect game until the fifth."

It has been said that baseball players are the most superstitious athletes on the planet, and once whispers began to circulate through not only the Panther dugout, but the home bleachers, everyone kept their distance from Everett.

Nobody wants to be the person who puts a jinx on their pitcher and is accused of throwing a monkey wrench into history-in-the-making.

"While he was in the dugout, I wouldn't even look at him," Coach Bradburn said. "He would come up to me and try to talk but I would just turn away from him. A perfect game is something you don't really pay attention to or notice until about the fourth or fifth inning, but that's when we started to realize he was perfect. We didn't say anything out loud but we all kinda knew."

While Everett grabs the headlines with his performance, he will be the first to admit that the accomplishment wouldn't have been possible without Burks and the other seven players behind him putting on a Gold Glove performance. He also had to give credit to the offense for putting runs on the board.

He takes pride in his off season training regimen, and his year-round preparation is what allows moments like this to become a reality.

"I have gained more velocity on my fastball and control of my off speed pitches since last season," Everett said. "Throwing a perfect game involves the entire team."

"Jackson Burks' diving play in the seventh inning is a moment that I will always remember, along with throwing it, and being a part of it myself," Everett said.