

# Authorities investigating fake bomb threat at Union General Hospital

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Investigators with the Union County Sheriff's Office

are looking into a fake bomb threat made to E-911 Dispatch about an explosive device being planted at Union General Hospital on July 1.

"At approximately 1:32 a.m. Monday, July 1, a man called into our 911 center and told them that there was a bomb in the hospital set to explode at 3 a.m.," UCSO Det. Marc Pilote said.

When asked by the dispatcher how he knew there was a bomb at the hospital, the man replied that he was the one who put it there, and then he hung up, Pilote said.

Dispatch immediately notified the Sheriff's Office, which in turn responded to the hospital and organized a bomb search effort.

"While there, we tasked the hospital with trying to locate any packages lying around, backpacks, bags, things of that nature," said Pilote. "Every department that was actively working the hospital, including the security staff, they were looking for anything suspicious."

"None of the hospital staff was able to locate anything suspicious – everything seemed to be fine."

Deputies checked the exterior of the main building as well, and they inspected doctors' offices and other buildings around the hospital campus, Pilote said.

The Sheriff's Office also notified bomb technicians with



the Georgia Bureau of Investigation, though searchers discovered no suspicious packages, and when 3 a.m. rolled around, "the hospital was still standing," Pilote said.

"As of this point, we're still investigating to see if we can identify the caller," Pilote said, noting that the call appeared to be an empty threat.

Pilote declined to comment on a potential motive be-

hind the threat, citing the ongoing nature of the investigation.

Joining the Sheriff's Office in responding to the threat were the Blairsville Police Department, Union County Fire Department and Union General EMS.

This was the first bomb threat to be made in several years, though local first responders have handled a couple of

recent bomb scares.

In February, authorities responded to the Blairsville Walmart in reference to a "pipe-looking device" that was actually just a harmless confetti popper missing its label.

And in May 2018, authorities investigated an unmarked package at Union General Hospital that turned out to be an unopened box of magazines.

## Hunter White...from Page 1A

their trash, so the addition of more flag depositories in the area will hopefully help alleviate that problem.

There are two wooden and two metal depositories, White said, all hand-painted by local artist George Lochli, whose work can be found at [www.GeorgeLochli.com](http://www.GeorgeLochli.com).

"I worked on this project for three days with four different mailboxes," said Lochli. "I just started painting."

"I didn't have a plan, and whatever happened, happened. Once I got the flag dropped on there, then I started going around, and I painted individual pictures. I started getting inspired more and more as I progressed. I had a good time doing it."

The boxes will be placed at the Nottely Marina, the Blairsville VA Clinic, the Old Union County Courthouse and the Maj. Leon Davenport Veterans Center.

White's father said the two wooden drop boxes were given to White by an American Legion member, and the two metal ones were purchased from Home Depot, one of which was also a donation from a local organization.

"The Eagle Scout process back when I was a kid, it was one sheet of paper and you filled it out, did your project, and that was about it," said William. "Now, it's extremely paperwork intensive, and so getting approval to even start the project took several months."

White began his Eagle Scout project about a year ago, though his schoolwork took precedence during the school year. So, it took a while, but Blairsville and Union County residents now have four more options for respectfully disposing of their old American flags.



One of the flag depositories donated by Hunter White and painted by George Lochli depicting the Twin Towers before they were felled by terrorists on Sept. 11, 2001.

Photo by Mark Smith

## EMC...from Page 1A

candidates running.

In previous years, whichever candidate had the most votes, or a plurality, won their election. However, the EMC directors voted in their

May board meeting to edit EMC bylaws to read that the election of directors would occur by majority vote.

Switching to majority-vote elections ensures that a single candidate always ends up with a majority of votes instead of simply earning the most votes.

And since majority-vote elections sometimes require costly runoff elections in the event that no candidate receives a majority of the vote in the initial round of voting, the board also adopted ranked-choice voting in May.

This style of voting allows for an accurate and speedy reflection of voter preference, as a person could still see their second choice elected if their first choice didn't win, all without the need of a runoff election.

## Local students receive honors at Piedmont College

Kaitlyn Bass of Blairsville, GA has been named to the Dean's Scholar list for Piedmont College for the Spring semester. Students named as a Dean's Scholar finished the semester with a perfect 4.0 GPA.

Congratulations to Madison Garrett of Blairsville, GA for making Piedmont College's 2019 Dean's List for the Spring semester. Students named to the Dean's List finished the semester with a GPA of 3.55 to 3.99. *NTJul10Z4/CA*



The Blue Ridge Mountain Chapter of Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) is comprised of services who've served our country as Commissioned Officers in the military or U.S. Public Health Service. Members may be active, inactive, reserve or retired.

The local chapter serves both Western North Carolina and North Georgia and meets on the third Wednesday of each month at different locations in our area.

For information on membership enrollment in the Blue Ridge Mountain Chapter, call Joff Filion at (386) 530-0904 or email [joff27@aol.com](mailto:joff27@aol.com) and visit [www.moaa.org/chapter/blueridgemountains](http://www.moaa.org/chapter/blueridgemountains).

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