

# Veterans...from Page 1A

an invaluable asset to Union County as longtime Union General Hospital administrator in years past. Davenport, the most decorated veteran in Union County history, was awarded three Silver Stars, a Bronze Star for valor and a Purple Heart during his service to his country.

"To me, this is the most important program we do each year," said Superintendent Steppe. "Many times, I think my generation and younger generations take our liberties and our freedoms for granted. We've been blessed over 200 years to have the freedoms and the liberties we all enjoy."

"Had it not been for those brave men and women sitting here before you, and many others that have gone on before them, we wouldn't understand the way our lives would be so different," said Superintendent Steppe. "We can never repay what they have done for us and the sacrifices they have made. We can thank them for their service to our country, and we must never forget freedom is not free."

High school junior Cody Short played the guitar and sang American Soldier, before being joined by student Kevin Potts, a member of the Civil Air Patrol Blairsville Squadron GA 152, to sing 8th of November.

Potts also presented the state and U.S. flags as a part of the Color Guard's introduc-



tion to the ceremony, along with fellow Civil Air Patrol Cadets Leilani Schroeder, Anthony Grader and Nicholas Sherman. The cadets are commanded by Squadron Commander Thomas Maholski.

Several high school seniors were on hand to pay their respects to the veterans in attendance Friday.

"My name is Aaron Stafford, and as a representative of the students of Union County Schools, I want to thank you for your service to our country," said Stafford. "If it wasn't for men and women of your caliber, and for the ones that stood before you,

we would not be able to enjoy the freedoms that we have today."

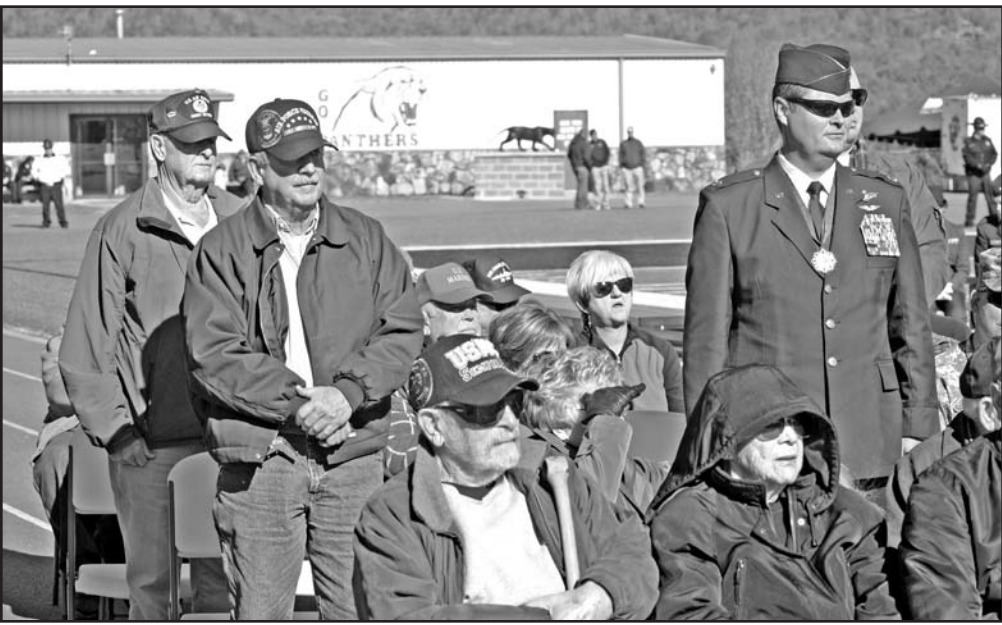
The bands and choruses from the schools played the various songs of each branch of the U.S. military, and veterans from each branch stood as their song was played.

Senior Rachel Todd spoke on the "defining quality of one who bears the title veteran," and enumerated just a few of the many reasons this nation honors these heroes.

"Today, we are here to celebrate, to honor and to commemorate all of our Armed Forces veterans," said Todd. "Those men and wom-

en who, whether in active duty roles or otherwise, have served since this nation's beginning. Indeed, their actions serve as testimony to their loyalty, to their devotion and to their own personal courage."

At the end of the program, there was a firing of a 21-gun Salute and playing of Taps to honor those men and women who have given their lives in service of their country.



## Ray set to join UT Martin Athletics Hall of Fame

Martin, TN - Former rifle shooter Jaymi Collar Ray (2003-07), daughter of Paul and Heidi Collar of Blairsville, was selected to join the University of Tennessee at Martin Athletics Hall of Fame. The ceremony was held on October 25, 2014.

Ray is one of just two shooters in UT Martin rifle history to earn All-Ohio Valley Conference accolades for four consecutive years (air rifle honors in 2004-06, smallbore accolades in 2006-07). She qualified for the 2006 NCAA Championships held in Colorado Springs, CO and left the program with the all-time record in individual smallbore (578, set at Kentucky on November 4, 2006). The Blairsville native wrapped up her remarkable playing career by being named the 2007 Bettye Giles Female Student-Athlete of the Year.



Jaymi Collar Ray receives plaque from Howard "Walt" Walters. "UT Martin gave me the welcoming, and supportive environment necessary to excel to my potential," Ray said. "This incredible honor is validation that my hard work and determination hasn't only been acknowledged but appreciated. I am so thankful for the amazing opportunity UT Martin gave me." Mr. Howard "Walt" Walters, Ray's mentor and friend, who is also a major member of the NRA, introduced her and awarded her the plaque. (Nov12,2014)CA