

Head...from Page 1A



Bob Head with family during the March 18, 2016, dedication of Bob Head Street.

Photo by Shawn Jarrard

Administration from Georgia State University.

Head married Carol Fleming on Nov. 19, 1960, and then went on to serve his country in the U.S. Army and the Georgia Air National Guard.

He later purchased Robert L. Head Building Supply from his dad, and also began Head-Westgate Corporation in 1972, which was a commercial construction and leasing company.

In 1991, Head started up Mountain Building Supply with his son, Robert, and then sold it to him in 1998.

Being very civic minded and community oriented, Bob inserted value into every organization to which he belonged. He did so not for notoriety or accolades, but for the love of his mountain hometown.

In fact, Head was known to be a most humble man, preferring to work behind the scenes to gently guide and direct.

Any recognition he received was almost embarrassing for him, as he felt that God should get the

honor and glory in everything, and his love for Blairsville and Union County was evident by the positive impact of his contributions.

Head realized at an early age that relationships are what build business, and he adopted a philosophy of servant leadership well before it became a business buzzword.

He put a high priority on the people that he served, though his most important relationship was the one he shared with Jesus Christ.

Head was a faithful member of First United Methodist Church of Union County, and he was involved in numerous ministries within the church body, proving instrumental in helping to shape that church into what it is today.

Other organizations that benefited from his involvement include the Blairsville Downtown Development Authority, Rotary Club of Union County and the Masonic Lodge.

He also served under former Gov. Zell Miller on the state's Industry, Trade and Tourism Board, and he was one of the founders of United

Community Bank, serving as chairman of the Board there until 2014.

Furthermore, Head was on the Board of Trustees and Executive Board for Young Harris College, and he loved to hike the many trails of North Georgia and Western North Carolina.

In honor of Head's many contributions to his community over the years, in 2016, the City of Blairsville dedicated as Bob Head Street the newly constructed off-ramp from Pat Haralson Memorial Drive to Georgia 515.

Surviving family members include his loving wife of 57 years, Carol Head; daughter LuAnn Head; son and daughter-in-law Robert L. Head III and his wife Stacy; son and daughter-in-law Michael and Heather Head; and son Kevin C. Head and his spouse, Frank Lanciani.

Arrangements were entrusted to the care of Cochran Funeral Home & Crematory of Blairsville.

Read Bob Head's full obituary inside the pages of this week's newspaper.

Burnette...from Page 1A

I tried to stay close to the train where I wouldn't be out far enough for the guards to see me and shoot me," said Burnette. "I laid there until the train got on up the track toward the mountains.

"I looked, there wasn't nothing around, so I got up and started coursing back the way I thought we'd come."

Tragically, every last man who stayed behind lost his life in a friendly-fire bombing of the train later that morning, as Burnette made his way to safety.

Having escaped dangerously close to the German border, Burnette snuck swiftly through the occupied countryside until he happened upon a small French town right at sunrise.

"I come in on top of a hill," said Burnette. "It was sort of like being above Blairsville looking down in town. I seen a boy come out of the house and go in the basement. He had a bucket in his hand, so I knew what he was doing."

Burnette made a break for it and followed the boy into the basement. The boy had just started in on the family milk cow, and he received quite a shock at the sudden appearance of a soldier.

"I tried to talk to him and couldn't understand anything he was saying," said Burnette. "I had an American flag sewed on my field jacket. I showed him that American flag on my arm, and he knew what that was."

The boy jumped up, spilling the little milk he'd managed to collect, and he ran upstairs with Burnette fast on his heels.

He was greeted by the boy's mother, who immediately pulled her surprise guest inside for fear of being discovered with an American soldier by the Germans.

She fed him the first thing he'd eaten in over a week, a country ham breakfast, as the boy went off to fetch someone who spoke English.

"I sat down and ate breakfast, and (the boy) came back after a while," said Burnette. "He brought a little short guy who had a duckbill cap on, a little old Frenchman. He walked up and said, 'Good morning, sir.' Boy, was I glad to hear that."

After changing into the local garb, a serviceable disguise despite being too small for him, Burnette accompanied the little Frenchman to his living quarters, which were situated above the drug store he owned in a neighboring village.

"He took me upstairs and pulled all the shades, and I



Anceberry Burnette waving to area residents during the 2016 Union County Memorial Day Ceremony.

Photo by Shawn Jarrard

sat up there and watched them Germans tromp up and down the street," said Burnette. "You could hear them a mile away, them old boots like they wore - they had hobnails in them or something, making noise worse than a team of horses."

Burnette stayed with the Frenchman overnight, and the next day, he joined up with five members of the French Forces of the Interior wanting to get closer to the frontline.

Soon after their journey began, three of the five Frenchmen died from enemy fire when spooked into the open by a close call with an artillery bombardment. Burnette even had to subdue one of the surviving members of his band, who panicked and almost gave away their position.

In his short time with the French, Burnette learned that the American forces were fighting their way across France and into Germany, south of their position.

He parted ways with his new friends, taking with him a small amount of provisions before striking out on his own. For about a week thereafter, he stealthily worked his way at night toward what he guessed was his unit.

Burnette eventually came upon a small border town in Germany, where he hid in an abandoned house until, after nearly two weeks of separation, he reunited with his outfit, Company M of the U.S. Army 36th Infantry Division.

"They were coming in right at the end of town," said Burnette. "I was up there at that house, and I walked out in the street and waited on them. They saw me, and they all come running up there where I was at."

A buck sergeant at the time, Burnette stayed with his unit in Germany through the end of the war, and he is currently the last surviving

World War II POW in Union County.

He thinks often of his fellow soldiers who lost their lives aboard the boxcar he escaped, the 64 men he served alongside who did not return home, and he thanks God to this day that he made it back alive to raise a family here in Blairsville.

Burnette's brother Herve also served during World War II, and his son, Benny, is a Vietnam Veteran.

Shane Burnette - grandson to Anceberry and son to Benny - is a veteran of the Gulf War, Operation Iraqi Freedom and Afghanistan, and he is just a couple years shy of a combined 30 years of active duty and reserve service in the U.S. Army.

Locally, Shane is one of many veterans employed by the Union County Sheriff's Office, a point of pride for Sheriff Mack Mason, who is himself a veteran of the Vietnam era.

"I want Anceberry's story told over and over," said Sheriff Mason. "I have said for years the service and sacrifices of the brave men and women of our Armed Forces goes unnoticed by the majority of Americans."

"I have also said on many occasions, what if that soldier who died on the battlefield had been able to make it home and raise a family? Would those members be our coworkers, friends or even family?"

"The cost of freedom comes with a great price. It is ours to enjoy only by these courageous men and women of the United States military who were and are willing to make the ultimate sacrifice. To God be the glory."

Anceberry's tale is a stark reminder that freedom isn't free, and the *North Georgia News* thanks the Burnettes and all other U.S. military men and women, past and present, for their service.



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