

# England...continued from Page 1A



Edie Rich, right, being presented with her big brother's burial flag at Arlington.

participated on two Olympic shooting teams.

However, being the humble man that he was, England's accomplishments over the years were not as widely acknowledged as they should have been.

Enter the retired Col. Nunnally.

Nunnally moved to Blue Ridge on a part-time basis nearly 10 years ago, and he's since gotten to know many area veterans.

He retired and made the move permanent some four years back, about the time when he and three Marine buddies decided to host a Marine Corps Ball, the first of its kind in Blue Ridge.

The event was a huge success not only because of the sold-out attendance, but in hindsight because it served as the backdrop for Nunnally to meet the regionally renowned Eric England.

There was but one problem - Nunnally couldn't believe it, but he had never heard of the retired scout sniper prior to his and Edie's decision to attend the Ball.

Afterward, Nunnally began checking into his story, becoming increasingly convinced that England had never gotten his due respect in the wider world of Marine Corps history and lore.

"I started to pull all this

information together, and I said, this man has been overlooked. For whatever reason, we've missed the boat, and I better fix it," said Nunnally.

Over the last few years, Nunnally fought to secure England's legacy nationally and on the state level, reaching out to the Georgia Military Veterans Hall of Fame and the U.S. Marine Corps about England.

And his efforts paid off, as both the Hall of Fame and Marines honored England in tremendous ways mere months before his death.

Along with his cousin, friend and fellow Marine Zell Miller, England was inducted into the 2017 Class of the Georgia Military Veterans Hall of Fame on Nov. 4, 2017.

Separately, a historian with the Marine Corps traveled to England's home to chronicle his story in a video published to YouTube on Dec. 12, 2017, titled "A Sniper's Distance: Legendary Marksman Master Sgt. Eric England."

In recognition of his passing, the Corps posted another video on the day of his interment at Arlington. This second video is called "Remembering Master Sgt. Eric England," and it showcases previously unseen footage from the original 2017 interview.

"We don't make many Eric Englands anymore," said Nunnally. "But his memory,

and now his name, will live on forever, now formally recognized in the history of the Corps."

And though he is gone from his native Union County, England's memory will also live on in the mountains that he loved, as his sister is committed to preserving the many medals, trophies and other historical pieces from England's storied career.

"What I see down the road - Eric's house is like a museum," said Rich. "I would like to get everything of his in a place where people could see it and appreciate it, because it's in his house and people are not able to enjoy it."

"I think, at that point, when we get it out there, then people will know more about Eric England."

England is now one of three Union County natives to be buried at Arlington. He joins U.S. Army Maj. Leon Davenport and U.S. Army Lt. Col. Mary Jo Miller in Virginia, though other former residents of Union County are interred at Arlington as well.

Also in attendance that June 4 in Arlington were Lamar Paris, Larry Garrett, Pam Hawkins and Cary Cox from Union County, plus a number of Marines who served with England, and many others who knew, loved and respected the man in life.

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