

# Bentley...continued from Page 1A

out and either helping the people on the ground below you when you're flying or helping out your allies to complete the missions of this country," said Bentley.

Acceptance into the elite training program is par for the course for Bentley, who graduated from the Academy in May 2017 having earned a bachelor's degree in Systems Engineering with a focus in Aeronautical Engineering.

Furthermore, Bentley made Dean's List every semester at the Academy, all while being one of nine students from his class selected as a member of the prestigious USAFA Competition Flying Team.

"You make some of the best friends you have in your life at the Academy," said Bentley. "I was on the Flying Team while I was there, and I hung out with them probably 90 percent of my time during the week or on the weekends.

"It's really those bonds that you form - they push you to achieve goals, and you push them, and they always have your back no matter what."

Added Bentley: "A lot of the people I know here (at

ENJJPT) were with me at the Academy on my team, and they still are pushing me to be the absolute best I can be. It's a little friendly competition, but at the end of the day, everyone has each other's backs in wanting to succeed."

After graduating from the Academy, Bentley did two months of sightseeing in the Pacific, then went to work at the USAFA airfield scheduling flights for six months before reporting to Sheppard AFB in January to begin preparation for ENJJPT.

It's been a long, ambitious road for Bentley, who has enjoyed numerous successes locally and abroad over the years, reflecting his innate ability to excel in any endeavor.

In his Union County days, he earned the rank of Eagle Scout in the Boy Scouts of America leading up to his ninth-grade year, before going on to experience four banner years at Union County High that culminated in his graduation as Class of 2013 Valedictorian.

During his high school career, Bentley was also the overall state winner of the Atlanta Falcons' Warrick Dunn



**Tsali Bentley II as a cadet in the U.S. Air Force Academy, pictured here with the USAFA Cadet Chapel in the background.**

Captain in the Community Award in 2012; played starting quarterback for the football team for three years; was a star member of the baseball team; served in a variety of student leadership roles; and more.

On the morning of his high school graduation, hours before delivering the Valedictory Address to his fellow Union County graduates, Bentley completed the training to earn his private pilot's license under the guidance of Instructor Pilot Stephen Thompson at the Blairsville Municipal Airport.

This was especially fitting, considering Bentley had decided his senior year to pursue a postsecondary education at the Air Force Academy, to which he'd received an appointment after being nominated by then-U.S. Sen. Saxby Chambliss and U.S. Rep. Tom Graves.

His options were many, however, as he had also received an appointment to the United States Military Academy at West Point, was on the waiting list for the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, and had acceptances from four colleges, including the University of Georgia and the Georgia Institute of Technology.

And now, 2nd Lt. Bentley is a year and a half away from achieving yet another amazing milestone in a long line of accomplishments, as he proves once more that he is a young

man possessed of both a fierce determination and a strong sense of duty.

protecting America and her allies from the very real forces of evil in the world.

"I'd like to say thank you to the community for all of the support that they've given me," said Bentley. "After graduation (last year), we had a get-together with some people in the community, and the turnout for that was unreal.

"I greatly appreciate everyone's support, and I look forward to making them proud one day."

Tsali D. Bentley II is the son of Tsali and Jacque Bentley, and the grandson on his father's side of U.S. Army Air Corps Lt. Melvin D. Bentley, who was a B-24 bomber pilot during

World War II. Bentley credits much of his success to the unwavering support of his family over the years, especially of his sister Morgan, and he keeps in regular contact with loved ones via group phone calls.

He returned home briefly to attend the May 28 funeral services of his maternal grandmother, the beloved Jo Gray George of Union County.

Two F-16s flew directly overhead during her graveside service, and it seemed to the family that Jo George was getting her own personal flyover.

# Poteete...continued from Page 1A

loving husband, father, brother and grandfather.

In his spare time, he enjoyed farming and raising cattle.

Surviving Poteete are his loving wife and best friend of 60 years, Barbara Davenport Poteete; son and daughter-in-law Larry and Stacey Poteete; son and daughter-in-law Terry and LuAnn Poteete; and son Jim Poteete.

Also surviving him

are brother Wallace Poteete; brother and sister-in-law Bobby and Sharon Poteete; brother and sister-in-law Jimmy and Cathy Poteete; sister Betty Davenport; sister and brother-in-law Shirley and Butch Garrett; and sister Barbara Poteete; along with six grandchildren and several nieces, nephews, and many other relatives and friends.

Funeral services for Poteete were held on June 10 at the Mountain View Chapel with Rev. Larry Weaver officiating.

The North Georgia Honor Guard carried out Military Honors for Poteete, and Masonic Rites were conducted by the Dooly Masonic Lodge #367.

Mountain View Funeral Home of Blairsville was in charge of the arrangements.

Read Billy Poteete's full obituary inside the pages of this week's newspaper.

## Library Board meeting

There will be a regional board meeting of the Mountain Regional Library system at Mountain Regional Public Library, Young Harris, Community Room, Wednesday, June 13 at 2. p.m. All library board meetings are open to the public.

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Who is Tom Taylor?  
Tom has been in the insurance business 36 years since his medical retirement from the US Army as a LTC. He has numerous awards, such as LUTCF, LILA AIA, Lifeleaders of GA & SC, Instructor for new agents. His awards for the Army include Silver Star, Bronze Stars, Meritorious Service Medals, Army Commendation Medals, Combat Infantry Badge, Airborne Wings, Air Crew Wings, Air Medal, Meritorious Unit Award, Good Conduct Medal, Reservist National Guard Achievement Medal and National Defense Medal recipient.

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