

Veterans Day ...from Page 1A

began with a Posting of the Colors by the North Georgia Honor Guard and a poignant Missing Man Table ceremony honoring those killed in battle or missing in action.

“Welcome you men and women who have served so bravely to protect us, the United States of America,” Honaker said to the gathered veterans. “Today, we honor you, the living, and those who have served and are no longer with us.”

“I also want to take

a moment to recognize the members of the North Georgia Honor Guard. Each of these individuals not only belongs to veterans service organizations, they have taken on that added responsibility of making sure any Union and Towns County veteran who has passed can be interred with military honors.

“This year, they have honored over 55 veterans at their funerals or memorials, and in addition, they have participated in 10 patriotic ceremonies.”



The Student Government Association and the Phi Beta Lambda business fraternity of North Georgia Tech hosted a Veterans Day event on Nov. 11.

Every year at this recognition event, the commanders of the various veterans service organizations present the Commander’s Award to a veteran who has gone above and beyond in serving veterans in the community.

This year, the Commander’s Award went to Chaplain Bill Honaker – Chuck’s own father – for his service with the Vietnam Veterans of America and VFW, service to veterans residing in nursing homes, and for

providing moral and spiritual support for veterans in this area.

“Just for the record, I had nothing to do with him being selected,” Cmdr. Honaker said, eliciting chuckles from fellow veterans. “I didn’t have any say-so in this at all, but I could not be more supportive.”

A special PowerPoint presentation prepared for the Veterans Day event showcased two authentic World War I diaries with pictures depicting the lives of U.S. Army soldiers

Roy E. Roberts and Sam Cole in war-torn France and Germany.

According to Ayers, Cole and Roberts served in separate outfits in World War I and never knew each other.

Cole met and married a German woman in Europe, then moved them both back to an Indiana farm after the war. He died in 1958.

Two years later, Roberts, an extension agent in Indiana at the time, met Cole’s widow at the farm on which she still lived, and they eventually married. The diaries were passed down to Roberts’ son, John Roberts, after Roy Roberts and his wife passed.

John Roberts turned the materials over to Ayers and the American Legion for safekeeping. Ayers cleaned up the diaries and pictures and digitized them into a PowerPoint presentation for historical purposes.

Ayers said Cole’s diary offered a day-by-day accounting of action in France and Germany, including those killed in action and those wounded.

This veteran’s recognition event was paid for by American Legion Post 121 in conjunction with several other Blairsville veterans service organizations, and First United Methodist Church of Union County donated the use of their Multiple Activity Center.

“We are glad to host them,” said Senior Pastor Don Landen of the veterans. “It’s wonderful to have them here just as a small thank you from us and the community for their great service.”

A similar event was held at the North Georgia Technical College earlier the same day, hosted by the Student Government Association and the Phi Beta Lambda business fraternity.

“The SGA and PBL held their first annual Veterans Day breakfast on Nov. 11,” said Blairsville Faculty Chair Carrie Rodriguez, who is also a U.S. Army veteran.

“We plan to do this again next year,” she said, adding that six veterans were served breakfast and they hope to have more in 2020.



American Legion Post 121 Cmdr. Mike Ayers



Veterans enjoyed a hearty meal at the Nov. 11 appreciation luncheon on Veterans Day at FUMC.

Photo Mark Smith