



Members of the North Georgia Honor Guard firing a volley out of respect for America's fallen service men and women on May 25. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

Memorial Day ...from Page 1A

acted as master of ceremonies for the event.

"These fallen heroes are men and women who believed in a cause greater than themselves," said Honaker. "They believed that this cause was worth more than their own lives and worthy of fighting for. That cause was freedom, liberty and the American way of life.

"Each of them took an oath to defend the Constitution of the United States of America from her enemies, both foreign and domestic. And a great many of us here took that same oath, an oath that does not have an expiration date.

"All of us must remain vigilant that our Constitution is upheld and that our rights are not infringed upon. To do any less than that would be an insult to those that we are here today to honor."

The Posting of the Colors was executed by Blairsville Boy Scout Troop 101, followed by local patriot Keith Bragg singing the National Anthem. Chaplain Bill Honaker, U.S. Army, Ret., delivered the invocation.

Honaker recognized former prisoners of war and their families, commanded the POW flag to be raised, and read a poem highlighting the importance of not forgetting America's prisoners of war and those missing in action.

As is customary, each branch of military service was recognized with the raising of their respective flags as the Union County High School band played their respective service anthems.

The 2019 Memorial Day Grand Marshal, retired U.S. Army Tech. 5 Ronald Taylor, a World War II medical technician and survivor of the Battle of the Bulge, was recognized.

Chuck Honaker also recognized the late Bert Schwarz, who helped to establish the Memorial Day Parade in Blairsville, and Roy Hamby, for his efforts with getting the War Memorial Park built.

Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris, Blairsville Mayor Jim Conley and Sheriff Mack Mason were all recognized as well.

Retired U.S. Navy Lt. Ray Williams was the keynote speaker at the Memorial Day Ceremony. After six years of active service during World War II and in Korea, plus 15 years of reserve duty, Williams retired from the Navy as an air intelligence officer.

"In the course of history, as our Founding Fathers struggled against the strict regulations of the English king, they wisely recognized that God created individuals with

certain unalienable rights," said Williams. "Therefore, they considered it reasonable and proper to establish a system of government that honored those rights.

"At the risk of their personal lives and fortunes, they announced their Declaration of Independence from the English monarchy and formulated the Constitution and Bill of Rights of the United States so that those rights would be guaranteed for all its citizens.

"The Stars and Stripes of our national flag are visual reminders of the fundamental ideals upon which our nation was founded. We are gathered here today in grateful memory and to pay tribute to those who fought and died to preserve those freedoms."

Williams told of his respect for women who serve in the military, pointing out that his wife is a veteran. He also told of the French, Dutch and Belgian people who see Americans as liberators because they had experienced the loss of their freedom.

"I suggest a meaningful tribute would be for each of us to live our daily lives in a manner that exercises the freedoms that our fallen heroes have fought for," said Williams. "Be active in organizations that promote good causes and patriotic citizenship.

"Participate in activities that support our form of government. And most importantly, exercise our wonderful freedom of religion. Be a living, meaningful memorial to honor those who have paid the supreme sacrifice in defending the freedoms of our country.

"Finally, when we look to God to invoke His blessing on our nation, we need to speak from the heart when we say, 'God Bless America.'"

Olivia Bragg presented a tribute to her uncle, Pfc. Harold H. Roberts, who was at Normandy and died in the Battle of the Bulge in 1944. Keith Bragg, Olivia's husband, sang a song he wrote about her uncle called "Harry's Song."

Honaker recognized the commanders of the various service organizations and asked them to come forward and accept the Laying of the Wreath as bagpipes played by the Appalachian Saint Andrew's Pipes and Drums of Blairsville.

The North Georgia Honor Guard, under the command of Wayne Roshaven, U.S. Marines, Ret., fired a six-gun salute, and "Taps" was played by a high school band trumpeter.

The ceremony ended with a prayer by Chaplain Bill Honaker and the Retiring of the Colors.

Brasstown Concert Association meeting

The Brasstown Concert Association (BCA) will hold its Annual Membership Meeting, followed by a pot luck dinner, at 5 p.m. on Sunday, June 2 at the home of Rosemarie Kelischek in Brasstown, NC.

The agenda includes the introduction of officers and directors, the treasurer's report of financial status, a summary of the history and mission of the organization, and announcement of the 2019-2020 season. Discussion will include plans for a fund-raising campaign for the purchase of a new piano. After an explanation of Board member responsibilities, members-at-large will be elected for the coming year. The meeting is open to anyone interested in BCA, but voting membership is limited to season ticket holders, sponsors and donors.

For additional information and directions to the meeting, please contact a BCA Board member at 828-389-4210, 828-361-0030, or at brasstownconcertnews@gmail.com. NT(May29,A1)SH