

# Military Ball...from Page 1A

Island,” Island Cmdr. Crenshaw said. “I needed five to start the Island. Richard was here, and I was here, and we had a fellow that was with us (Mike Ruback), but he moved back to Florida.

“Long story short, the first meeting we had around 12 or 14 people. That same year, we decided to start a Seabee Ball, and that was how it kicked off. We knew we did not have enough Seabees, so we opened it up to all military.”

And Crenshaw couldn't have been happier with the turnout in 2021, the group's best attendance in the five years since the first ball in 2016, especially considering all that's happened since early 2020.

“We were down last year because of COVID and all of that,” Crenshaw said. “This year, I have got around 144 signed up. These guys always come out to celebrate with us, and we enjoy having the ball.”

The ceremony opened with music from the Appalachian Saint Andrew's Pipes & Drums, which played a patriotic selection of tunes as students with Mountain Area Christian Academy's CJROTC, or Reserve Officers' Training Corps for Christian Schools, posted the colors.

Island Chaplain Richard Hoibraten explained the purpose of the Missing Man Table and the importance of each item on the table and the reason behind toasting those who did not return from battle.

“This is a sacred table that is done in different ways but has the same ultimate purpose for those that could not be home



The Appalachian Saint Andrew's Pipes & Drums provided the musical entertainment for the evening, performing the Armed Forces Medley and other songs that evening, including the bagpipe go-to “Amazing Grace.”  
Photo by Jarrett Whitener

to be with their loved ones,” Hoibraten said. “Whether it is missing in action, killed in war or whatever.”

The keynote speaker for the event was retired U.S. Navy Civil Engineer Corps Cmdr. Mike Streckert, who reviewed the history of the Seabees and how the group has worked with other military branches over the last 79 years.

“In 2010, the Seabees and Coast Guard worked hand in hand to open the port in Haiti after a major earthquake,” Streckert said.

Continuing, “Sailors and

Marines have always had a true love/hate relationship with one another, but the Marine Corps is the biggest customer of our Seabees. They are our clients. Where they go, we go. So, it only stands to reason we speak their language.”

While Streckert told stories highlighting the past, he also addressed the current state of the country and the importance of leadership and working toward a better future.

“I've seen this throughout both my Navy and civilian careers,” Streckert said. “Great leaders are frequently replaced

by poor leaders, weak leaders. Regardless of where you stand, I personally believe that our nation is going through that same cycle.

“I survived those periods of weak leadership in my past, but I decided to do a little research on how to survive during weak leadership. I found a few things we need to maintain focus on during these turbulent times. One, do not despair. Despair is focused inward as opposed to outward.”

Streckert told the group that strong institutions continue long after leaders depart, though he feels the nation is at a crossroads and may not be as strong as it once was.

“You and I are what made our nation great,” Streckert said to the gathered patriots. “When you hear talk of the grassroots of our nation, our institution, that is us. Honor your credibility and reputation at all costs. This point, I feel, is the key to our sanity and survival.

“Each of us swore an oath. Each of us stands for the freedoms of our nation. Despite anything this nation may suffer, we have each other. As the saying went in the '60s, ‘keep the faith.’ I truly believe that each person has been put in the place they are in because of God's plan – not just the plan for the individual, but His sovereign plan.”

After the speech, the group cut the anniversary cake and celebrated a night of dancing, silent auctions and companionship. The Seabees are thankful to everyone who helped make the event such a success.

## William Dyer receives Quilt of Valor



U.S. Army Veteran William Dyer

On February 23rd Homestead Hospice of Blairsville presented William Dyer of Blairsville with a Quilt of Valor for his service in the Army. The Quilt and Pillowcase were donated by the Quilt of Valor Foundation and locally made by the Misty Mountain Quilters Guild. The ceremony was held at his home in Blairsville surrounded by his family. Shannon Larsen of Homestead Hospice, read about the Quilts of Valor; sharing their meaning and their history and quilted and pinned Mr. Dyer.

Congratulations to Mr. Dyer and we thank him deeply for his service!  
NT(Mar10.27)CA

## Weekly Patriot Reflection



### Constitutionalism

Over the course of our history there has been constant conversation, and heated debate, over the status, structure and meaning of our Constitution. It has been battered and abused by those who would deem it inadequate for today's society. Lawmakers have abused it more than any other group and have tried to change it, broadening, or completely changing its meaning. President Thomas Jefferson, in referring to the Constitution as a legal document said, “Those who would not uphold the Constitution have no right to public office.”

With the swearing in of Neil Gorsuch as the 101st Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court there is indeed someone who has the right to hold public office. He has stated that judges should strive to apply the law as it is, focusing backward and looking to text, structure and history to decide what a reasonable reader at the time of the question would have understood what the law was—not to judge on personal, moral or political beliefs.

We need more originalists and textualist lawmakers in public office, if we are to continue to hold up the Constitution as the legal, binding document of liberty, justice and freedom.

A Patriot Reflection is presented weekly by www.joshuaswarriors.org.  
NT(Mar10.24)CA

### Appalachian Duplicate Bridge Club News

On Friday, March 5, six and one half tables participated in the Big Canoe Virtual Bridge Game. Donald and Cary Jackson earned first place honors for North-South as a Mitchell movement was in use for this game. They had a 64.04% game and earned 1.05 black points. Coming in second place were Ray Berry and Joe Wald with a 61.67% game and earned 0.73 black points. Third place went to Richard Byers and Ruby Moody with a 58.89% game and 0.53 black points.

First place East West went to two of our local club members, Bobbie Mace and Sue Wall, with a 60.00% game and earned themselves 1.05 black points. There was a tie for second/third place among Martha Power and Catherine Pichon and Bob Crouch and Chuck Palmer with a 56.67% game and 0.63 black points awarded to each pair.

The Big Canoe Bridge Club will continue to provide a virtual game on Fridays beginning at 1 p.m. Make plans to participate. Hopefully it won't be too much longer until we are able to resume face-to-face play. Until then, continue to be safe and well.  
NT(Mar10.21)CA

## Hamilton - Henrikson to wed



Kyle Henrikson and Adrenne Hamilton

Adrenne Hillary Hamilton and Kyle Eugene Owen Henrikson are pleased to announce their engagement.

Adrenne is the daughter of Scott Hamilton and Tanya Gibson, both of Hiawassee, and the granddaughter of the late Miles and Marie Hamilton and the late Barnett and Doris Gibson.

Kyle is the son of Keith Henrikson of Hiawassee and the late Cheryl Stewart of Hayesville, and the grandson of Thelma and the late Karl Henrikson of Woodstock and Lonnie and Janis Horn of Hayesville.

A Winter 2022 wedding is being planned.  
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