

Memorial Day...from Page 1A

and we live it every day. The cost of freedom, we know that it is not free. Many of you have lost loved ones in the military. Many of you have struggled with the loss of a family member each and every day.

"We come together once a year, and we honor those on Memorial Day. But truthfully, I hope that most of our country, if not all of our country, thinks about these fallen comrades every day, and we pray for their families every day."

The commissioner went on to say that pondering the price of freedom "tears my heart out," and he asked those gathered, "Is it worth it?"

And in short order, he made abundantly clear that, yes, the price of freedom is worth it.

"There are some people that will tell you no, it is not," Bradshaw said. "They haven't lived long enough. They haven't lived in the right places to sit here and tell you that it is worth it.

"You think of people that, maybe they are a mom or dad who sends their son or daughter off to the military. They leave, and that is the last time they ever lay eyes on them, ever. It is very sad, but it is real.

"You think of the guys, men and women both, that have fought in battles, and they come home with not a scratch on

them anywhere on their body, but they have to live with the guilt knowing that they left some friends behind.

"Maybe some of those friends did something very heroic – and we know that if they died, that is heroic enough – but if they did something to save somebody else's life for their comrades, they have to live with that agony. And maybe there are some of you here today that have to live with that."

Bradshaw is father to U.S. Army 1st Lt. Garrett Bradshaw, who graduated Ranger, Airborne and Air Assault schools in 2019 and is currently stationed at Fort Drum, New York, in the 10th Mountain Division.

VFW Chaplain Dwight Moss, a Vietnam Veteran, offered the closing prayer for the ceremony Monday, and he also spent valuable time raising awareness for veterans and active duty military members who commit suicide every day at alarming rates.

"Since we have started gathering here this morning, we have probably had at least

two suicides... The families of fallen soldiers or families that have already been talked about, I just want to mention them," Moss said.

Towns County Fire Rescue lent a hand Monday, hanging an American flag from its ladder truck over US 76 across from the park.

An important part of the ceremony featured the annual

laying of the memorial wreaths by veteran service organizations with local vets saluting as the wreaths were carried in.

The VFW and other organizations work to promote the memory of America's fallen heroes throughout the year and to ensure that veterans and active duty service members know they're not alone.



Iwo Jima Veteran Bud Johnson, front, joins other veterans in saluting as the memorial wreaths are carried into the May 25 service. Photo by Lowell Nicholson



Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw delivered a heartfelt message about the price of freedom during his Memorial Day remarks as keynote speaker for the event Monday. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

Parade...from Page 1A

especially in these times. They have done everything that they could to make us feel special and loved."

Plenty of other students were optimistic last week as well, with some even seeing the graduation parade as the Class of 2020 cementing a new first in Towns County School history.

"It was pretty much really sudden, and we weren't expecting it that quick," Senior Jacob Kinsey said of the school interruption due to COVID-19. "Most people say that you better enjoy it while it lasts, and I never really believed them until now. I understand why it was so sudden.

"Having the parade is pretty cool. Usually we are the grade that misses out on all the new stuff, so having this is special, and we can say that it is our own. It is important to enjoy things while they last, especially if you play sports, because it can just stop all of a sudden."

The Towns County Sheriff's Office led the parade, and parents and onlookers gathered along Main Street to cheer on the community's graduates and show their support for the hard work that the students have put in all year.

"I really think this parade is a neat way to show pride in these students," onlooker Bob Stone said. "I'm just here to support all of these students, because I know that it must have been hard for them to not have the things that they would normally have at the end of the year.

"Senior year is a big deal, and a lot of people remember it; I remember mine. I think



Alex Lim was one of dozens of Towns County seniors who took part in the parade to Main Street in Hiwassee May 22 for a town parade. Photo by Lowell Nicholson



TCHS Seniors Jacob Kinsey and Jamison Wood got together with their friends at the Old Rec Gym just before the start of the parade Friday. Photo by Jarrett Whitener

this is something that they will remember forever, and this community is here to cheer them on as they move forward with their lives. Moving forward is all we can do right now."

The Class of 2020 is

now looking ahead to both a traditional prom and graduation in July, where graduates will conclude their Towns County School journey and take their next steps forward in life.

Cruiz-In...from Page 1A



farther apart at the fairgrounds, plus additional sanitation and safety precautions, including handwashing stations to be located around the fairgrounds.

In addition, pre-registration is highly recommended this year to limit the number of people registering their cars onsite. According to Parrish, the Cruiz-In and fairgrounds are going the extra mile to keep guests safe, but at the end of the day, personal responsibility and old-fashioned common sense will be the best safeguards.

"We've had lots of interest from new people that are coming this year," Parrish said. "I think everyone is really eager to get out, so we're looking forward to having one of the biggest and best shows that we've had here (in Hiwassee).

"We're also doing everything we can to let people

know that we're emphasizing safety so they know it's okay to come out. At the same time, we will leave it up to the people to be responsible and take care of themselves by wearing masks, washing hands and bringing extra hand sanitizer.

"We'll even have masks made with our logo on them that we'll give to everyone that registers a car."

A new wrinkle to this year's event is a drive-in theater, allowing guests to safely gather in one place to watch a movie from their vehicles. The drive-in theater will feature a classic car-themed movie while taking advantage of a large theater screen that enables moviegoers to receive audio via FM radio.

"We realize the (coronavirus) is out there, but we need to get going again," Parrish said. "Life goes on, we all need to make a living, and (Towns County) needs the tourism."

"At the same time, we're going to keep everyone safe and try to prevent holding events that cause people to gather in one place, which is why we're hosting a drive-in theater."

For additional information or suggestions, contact the Georgia Mountain Moonshine Cruiz-In on Facebook or at 662-587-9572. People can also visit the official event website at gammoonshinecruizin.com.

After the Moonshine Cruiz-In wraps, the 70th Annual Georgia Mountain Fair will follow on Aug. 14-22.

Despite the later-than-usual dates, the fair will continue featuring all day arts and crafts, daily musical performances at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. and carnival rides after 2 p.m. For further details, visit the new and improved georgiamountainfairgrounds.com.

