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Local military vets honored with patriotic Veterans Day Service

By Chad Stack
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Veterans and residents gathered for the annual Veterans Day Service at Towns County Veterans Memorial Park on Monday, Nov. 11.

Iwo Jima Veteran Clarence "Bud" Johnson received special recognition for his service and advocacy for area veterans, and local American Legion Chaplain Scott Drummond opened the program with an invocation.

Drummond also presented the names of six local veteran heroes as new additions to the Veterans Memorial Wall inside the park, with family representatives of the departed present.

These veterans newly recognized on the Memorial Wall are: Frontz Goring, U.S. Air Force; Robert Marshall, U.S. Army; Joyce Miller, U.S. Army; Harold Nicholson, Army; George Shook, Army; and Stanley Warth Jr., U.S. Navy.

The memorial wall includes the names of more than 1,300 local veterans who proudly served in the United States military in life.

Former American Legion National Cmdr. Dale Barnett served as the keynote speaker that Monday. Barnett is a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, and he later went on to serve his country in the Gulf War, earning the Bronze Star and a Combat

Infantry Badge.

The retired Army lieutenant colonel touched on a number of topics near and dear to veterans' hearts, including the American Legion's progress in helping veterans exposed to Agent Orange receive treatment after being previously denied.

And thanks to American Legion members lobbying Congress, Barnett said the organization can now accept members who served during non-declared war eras.

Also recently, the American Legion arranged for grant money to pay U.S. Coast Guard members who were adversely affected by the government shutdown earlier this year, as the Coast Guard is the only branch of the military

to fall under the Department of Homeland Security.

Barnett made sure to touch on the importance of communities having civic-minded patriots like those abundant in Towns County.

"To see the number of people here this morning to honor veterans speaks volumes about the type of community you have," Barnett said.

The Towns County High School Indian Raider Marching Band performed "The Star-Spangled Banner," Taps and other patriotic songs as part of the ceremony.

American Legion Post #23 Cmdr. John Harkins spoke about the history of Veterans Day, relating how

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Past National Commander of The American Legion Dale Barnett served as the keynote speaker in the 2019 Towns County Veterans Day Service. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

Veteran Buzz Tatham presents 'Letters of the Greatest Generation'

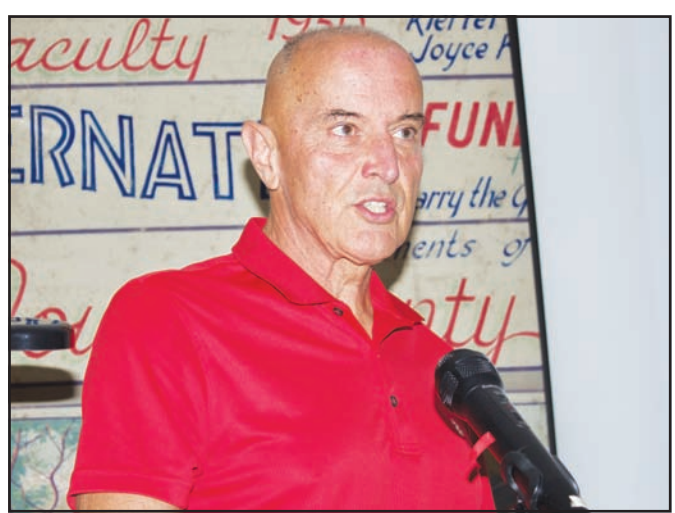
By Chad Stack
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

In honor of Veterans Day, the Towns County Historical Society's own Buzz Tatham led a program about World War II in the group's Nov. 11 monthly meeting at the Old Rec Gym.

Tatham, himself a veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps, prepared a special presentation for the meeting called "Letters of the Greatest Generation from Towns County," which included letters and pictures addressed to his mother during the war.

"When my parents died and I sold the house, I went through so many things," Tatham said. "And one thing I came across, which I knew existed, was mom's cedar chest."

While going through his mother's cedar chest, Tatham said he found letters that family had written to her through the years, and many of the letters



Historical Society member and veteran Buzz Tatham shared World War II-era letters and pictures addressed to his mother in the group's meeting on Veterans Day. Photo by Chad Stack

and pictures he found were from family members fighting in World War II.

Spoken at his family's start in Towns County, Tatham said his father was a general site worker who helped build

the dam in 1941, though he soon after went to serve in the Navy. Several letters shown in the meeting were addressed to Tatham's mother from his father during the war.

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Elections Board consolidates Tate City Precinct with Macedonia

By Mark Smith
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Members of the Towns County Board of Elections and Registration unanimously voted to combine the Tate City Precinct with the Macedonia Precinct in their Nov. 13 monthly meeting.

"The ads have run in the paper for two consecutive weeks," Board Chair Janet Oliva said. "Tate City has agreed. The commissioner has agreed. Now, we're just making it official that we consolidate, and then we will notify the Secretary of State's Office."

"We are hereby creating a resolution that states that we are consolidating Tate City with the Macedonia Precinct, and it will be official as of today."

Now that the Tate City Precinct has officially closed for consolidation, the county has three voting precincts: Hiwassee at the Civic Center; Young Harris at the Lodge Hall Building, aka Stephens Lodge; and Macedonia at Macedonia Baptist Church.

As previously reported,



Towns County Board of Elections and Registration Chair Janet Oliva leading the board's Nov. 13 regular meeting. Photo by Mark Smith

the board office consulted directly with Tate City residents about the possibility of merging the Tate City Precinct with Macedonia.

Issues broached during consolidation talks included the necessity of new training for local poll workers on the brand-new voting machines, plus expected new transportation procedures and heightened

security requirements for equipment in the field.

Ultimately, the board office and Tate City residents decided that closing the precinct and having Tate City voters travel to Macedonia to cast their ballots on Election Day would make the overall election process more efficient with an added benefit of reducing costs

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BOE welcomes cross country kids, receives modernization grant update



Several Indians and Lady Indians Cross Country runners attended the Towns County Board of Education meeting for recognition on Nov. 11. Photo by Chad Stack

By Chad Stack
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

On Monday, Nov. 11, the Towns County Board of Education recognized the High School Varsity Cross Country Teams for their performances in the Class A Public State Championships.

Both squads placed Top Ten in their big Nov. 2 races

in Carrollton, with the Lady Indians finishing eighth and the boys finishing fourth.

High School Principal Roy Perren announced that two runners were selected to All-State teams: junior Liam King and sophomore Alison Markham.

King and Markham competed as top runners for their respective teams all season

long, with King finishing eighth at state and Markham placing 10th.

Rosser is in his second year coaching the Indians and Lady Indians, and for the second year running, both teams made it to the state championships under his leadership.

"This is a great group of kids," Rosser said.

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City recruiting volunteers to help decorate ahead of 'Light Up Hiwassee'

By Jarrett Whitener
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Light Up Hiwassee will return for its third year on Saturday, Dec. 7, beginning at 4:30 p.m. on the Town Square, and the city is asking for volunteers to help decorate ahead of the big evening.

The beloved annual event provides family-oriented activities for the community, such as rock painting, Christmas caroling, letters to Santa, and Santa himself making an appearance for children to visit with and make pictures.

"We will have cookie decorating and maybe throw in some icing, because people like to decorate them, and we will also have other little activities for people to take part in," Mayor Liz Ordiales said. "The CASA volunteers will be there to talk about what CASA does, and they will have the luminaries all over the square. It makes it look really pretty



Hiwassee City Councilwoman Anne Mitchell and Mayor Liz Ordiales are two of the driving forces behind Light Up Hiwassee, now in its third year. Photo by Jarrett Whitener

at night."

Each luminary will honor someone special, with names being provided through donations by individuals to Enotah CASA, a volunteer

organization that advocates for abused and neglected children in the county.

"It's really beautiful, and we have people come out and

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Riley, Potter spread wildfire preparedness message with Firewise

By Jarrett Whitener
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Staff Writer

Frank Riley of the Chestatee-Chattahoochee RCD Council spoke with the Mountain Movers and Shakers about the importance of Firewise Communities on Friday, Nov. 15.

"One of the things we are most proud of is, we are the state Firewise liaisons," said Riley, who also serves as a local volunteer firefighter. "We handle the Firewise Program for the whole state of Georgia under contract of the Georgia Forestry Commission. Firewise is a program that is mostly common sense."

The program makes it a goal to help communities

protect their homes from fires by creating defensible spaces and barriers between houses and fuel sources for fires.

"In Towns County, we are an all-volunteer fire department," Riley said. "We only have two paid employees, so we have to drop what we are doing, run to the station, and then go to the house, and we do it pretty quickly."

"What defensible space does is create an area around your home that removes fuel. You don't have to cut the trees or the bushes. It just removes the limbs, leaves and all the stuff that burns up easily away from your house."

"It gets you time until we can get there and gives an area where we can put a fire team in there with a hose."

Firewise also provides resources to help communities plan for emergency situations so people can be prepared in the event of wildfire.

Accompanying Riley in the meeting Friday was Judy Potter, who lives in Tate City and supports the Firewise initiative there and in the county.

"In a fire, we expect the fire people to come and look after us, but what are we doing to look after ourselves?" Potter said. "I'll give you an idea - my home in Tate City was a dream for me to build, and I am in the woods."

"I thought it would look good, and I have the most beautiful cedar shakes on my house. I'm at the top of a ridge, and fire moves up faster than it

does down, and I've got cedar shakes."

"So, with Firewise, the first thing you do is look at your own home. When talking with the organization, what I had an opportunity to learn about was that we found a product that I can spray on my cedar shakes to make them fire retardant. It will char, but it will not burn."

Potter talked about simple ways against defensible homes against fires, steps that every homeowner can take to potentially save their property and maybe even their lives.

"It's not brain surgery, but it's to think about where the liabilities are on my home,"

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Frank Riley talked Firewise in the Nov. 14 meeting of the Mountain Movers and Shakers. Photo by Jarrett Whitener

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