

# Veterans...from Page 1

this observance. On this day we bare witness bringing honor and meaning to a tradition of tribute for our fallen heroes.

"Those men and women answered the call of duty and put themselves in harm's way for the sake of our country," Capt. Evans said. "Many gave their lives so that we may be free for the Constitution, which they swore to protect and defend and for the extraordinary ideals for which the United States stands. Our gratitude to them is boundless."

"I'll confess to you, however, right up front, that I have not always been passionate about veterans, even though I've had years of active duty in the Navy," he said. "You see, I grew up in a family where military service was just normal."

He had a younger brother in the Marine Corps who served two tours in Vietnam, with another brother who served a four-year term in the Air Force. His father served in Europe in World War II as a bomber pilot. Both of his grandfathers served in World War I in the United States Army, not to mention he had three uncles who served in World War II as well.

For Capt. Evans, defending the United States and its values, "was as normal as going to school, graduating, getting a job and raising a family," he said. "So please forgive me if I didn't give a lot of thought in the past for the veterans. I thought every family served."

His time spent in Washington D.C. in the 1990's changed his mind.

"It has got me thinking, to a greater extent, about the significance of Memorial Day," he added, "Things changed on an almost unbelievable and unreal day on Sept. 11, 2001. We all know what day that was. This day was a day we realized we were going to go to war again."

"A new patriotism blossomed and appeared everywhere, and as the names, pictures, and life stories of those fallen were published in the media I began to pay more attention to those who are not only currently serving, but those who are willing to serve and fight against those held responsible for the 9/11 attacks," he said.

The VFW Post 7807 Commander Mel Halfon and



CPO C.E. "Bud" Johnson, USN Retired, presented Capt. Evans with a memento, thanking him for being part of the community and all of his long service to our country.

Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall, Hiawasse Mayor Barbara Mathis, Towns County Schools Superintendent Melissa Williams, Towns County Fire Chief Mitch Floyd and EMS Director Ricky Mathis were all in attendance as the Laying of the Wreaths took place honoring the sacrifices of fallen Veterans.

VFW Post 7807, Ladies Auxiliary, American Legion Post 23, Ladies Auxiliary, Sons of the American Legion Squadron 23 and the Army-Navy Squadron 66, also joined them.

The wreaths were placed and as the morning sunlight soon rose to noon, fellow veteran and Towns County resident Eddie Zanetti sang the patriotic hymn God Bless America, accompanied by the Towns County High School band led by Frank McKinney, who will sound off

into retirement after 30 years as TCHS band director.

"Thank God we have beautiful weather," VFW Commander Halfon as he thanked the Veterans in attendance before turning the Invocation over to the Rev. Richard Hoibraten.

"I would also like to recognize our widows of Veterans," Johnson said. "We thank you widows for your service and what you do for your men. I don't get impressed too often with a lot of people. I take them for who they are and what they stand for."

In Towns County, and all over the United States of America, those words, as well as the ones spoken by each veteran in Veterans Memorial Park, rang especially true on this Memorial Day for those present as well as those no longer with us.

As the moment of silence brought prayer and consideration in Towns County, those heroes will continually be remembered and always be spoken for.

# Nannie...from Page 1

enthusiasm and fond memories of days past as those stood in line for a moment with the birthday girl for good conversation and pictures. As a lifelong citizen of Hiawasse, Rose establishes a delightful connection with everyone she meets.

"She's such a beautiful person," said Allen Sims, her grandson and decorated Air Force Veteran

having served his country for 30 years. "She's so gracious—loves life. I've never heard her say anything bad about anybody. I think that's one of her secrets to having had all these years."

That was the consensus of the crowd as well, consisting of family, including her five grandchildren and five great-grandchildren, and friends, one of which includes Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall.

An inscription comprised of kind-hearted words, wisdom and grace was displayed on a plaque given to her by her church and the community, reading "Those who served, God has a special place for each of us to serve, and you have chosen to follow his path. There have been the hands, the feet, the voice, and the love of God expressed in many different ways. You have chosen to honor him as you have served in his name. Thank you for your willingness to give up yourself and be used where God has placed you. You have blessed many, many lives."

"Thank you, thank you," responded Rose with humble acceptance of recognition. "This place is home and it's a good place to live, I'll tell you that. I don't worry, I don't stress."

On the topic of living 100 years, still piecing her time together with strength and modesty, she added, "I really enjoy puzzles."

Last month Nannie Rose was presented with the Certificate of Congressional Recognition

from 9th District U.S. Congressman Doug Collins for her lifelong achievements and service in Towns County and a flag, which was flown over the U.S. Capitol to mark the occasion.

"I'm so glad everybody came," Rose said, surrounded by the birthday fare and gifts of good spirits. "They're all such good friends and have been for a long, long time. We just continue with them all along."

Nannie Rose Sims Tatham turns 100 years old on May 28.

# MECHS...from Page 1

the Mountains, North Georgia Technical College, Fantastic Future Award, The Insurance Mart Scholarship, UCBI of Blue Ridge, Out of the Blue Shop, Blue Ridge Adventure Wear, Morganton Eastern Star, Blue Ridge Kiwanis Club, and Young Harris College.

Mountain Education Charter High School is a collaborative effort of Elbert, Fannin, Forsyth, Gilmer, Lumpkin,

Pickens, Rabun, Towns, Union, and White County School Systems.

The MECHS collaborative organization also operates sites in Habersham and Stephens Counties.

The school is an academic, self-paced, individualized, evening high school that serves students who are seeking a non-traditional school environment and who desire a Georgia high

school diploma.

MECHS also serves students who need to make-up missed credit from their regular high school, enabling them to stay on academic track and graduate with their peers.

MECHS is a year-round high school that offers all Georgia required curriculum courses, as well as, a variety of vocational courses and state-mandated testing.

# Kendall...from Page 1

county facilities the same as other groups as well as non-believers.

"While in my office this week, a citizen was expressing this concern about this letter and looked down at the Bible on my desk - stating, 'the next thing they will be trying to make you remove the Bible from your desk.' We shall not let this happen nor keep Christian people from having access to our county facilities."

Commissioner Kendall continued, "I am so grateful during this Memorial Day for the sacrifices of our veterans and those fallen heroes who have given so much so that we can live in a country with a Constitution that gives Mr. Jobson the freedom to write such a letter."

"I appreciate the Towns County Herald's wisdom to print it, which was the right thing to do by making our citizens aware that this kind of

thinking is out there that we must guard against.

"It is imperative that our country keep a free press that will publish all sides, the bad and ugly as well as the good," Commissioner Kendall said.

"I agree with a Founding Father and paraphrase his statement, 'An educated, informed public and free press is the life blood of our Democracy liberties and freedoms,'" Kendall said.

# Shooting...from Page 1

room.

A subsequent search of the suspect's home revealed the firearm which allegedly fired the shots. This and other evidence was gathered by investigators on the scene. Investigators determined that a verbal altercation had

allegedly occurred between the two relatives on the night before.

Elizabeth Lucille Gilbert, 33, of Hiawasse, was arrested and charged with aggravated assault, four counts, cruelty to children, two counts, reckless conduct, four counts, criminal

damage to property, discharging a firearm under the influence, and making false statements to officers.

As of press time Gilbert remained in custody in the Towns County Detention Center.

# Grads...from Page 1

solos. It wouldn't be good. And did I mention it might be hot?" he playfully added, commenting on the apparent and approaching summer that lies ahead.

However, thoughtfulness played a bigger role as he spoke of spanning confidence in the young faces of those before him.

"I challenge you to view it not as the ending chapter of your lives but rather the beginning of a journey that's ahead of each of you," said Gibson.

His counsel amongst the graduating class was spoken with clarity as well as humility while he told a thought-provoking tale about success and perseverance.

"I'll ask you to visualize that with me; you're being forced under water. You have no air," he explained, adding, "To experience success you must fight for it, just like you would fight for a lifesaving breath of air. Just as you did the first day of school, I encourage you today to work toward your goals and fight for them with the same passion and energy as you would for a lifesaving breath of air."

Gibson also explained a simple truth by stating, "In this next journey called life you'll each face many challenges and setbacks, and I wish I could tell you differently. But you must remember that giving up should never be an option."

He then spoke of the four core values of Towns County High School: Teamwork, Character, Honor, and Service. He challenged them to maintain these core values before asking

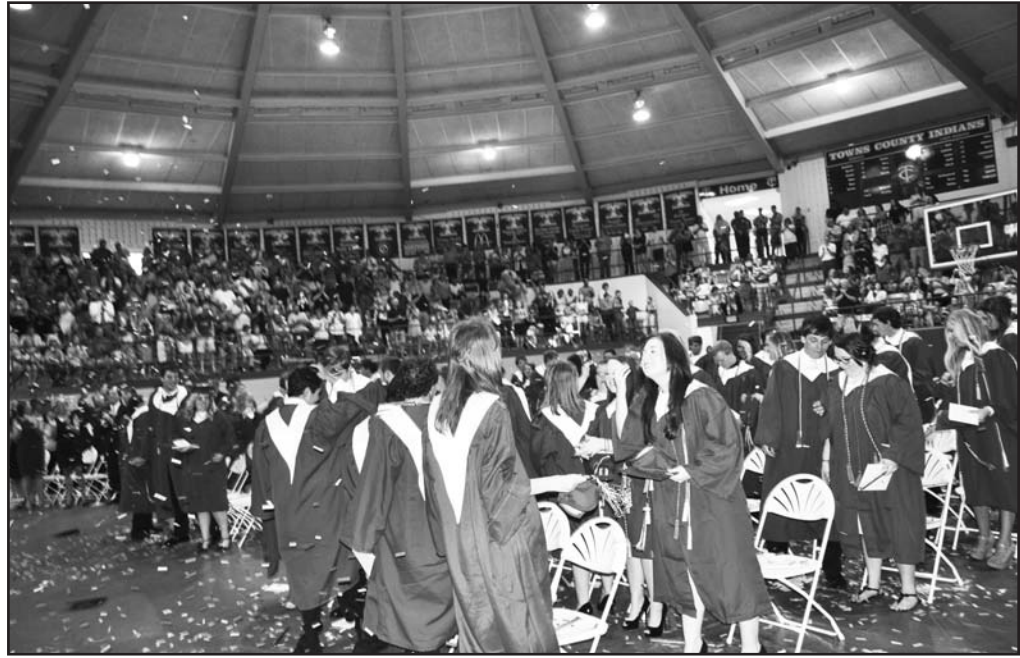


all of the teachers, K through 12th grade, as well as parents and guardians, to stand to be honored by all, outreaching more than the gymnasium floor, onto the surrounding bleachers, making positive examples of said core values, thanking them for their sacrifices.

"Graduates I encourage you to tell your teachers, tell

your parents, tell your guardians before you leave how thankful you are for them and what they've meant to you," he said. "I couldn't be prouder of each of you in the way you shape the great things you have accomplished in life."

"You always have a home here at Towns County High School."



# Eighth Grade graduates

