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Those honored Saturday were Joseph Adams Sr., who died in February, and David Friedly, who passed a week before the Confederate Memorial Day service, on April 22.

"Joseph was a former adjutant and a keeper of the record about the placing of flags on our Confederate dead," said Massengale. "David was a founder of the David W. Payne Camp No. 1633. He did many things to help get the camp going."

Massengale lauded Friedly for his extensive knowledge of the area's past, adding that what Friedly knew about local Confederate history was "beyond what we can comprehend."

"We owe a debt of gratitude to these men," concluded Massengale.

The keynote speaker for the day was Army of Tennessee Councilman Jason Bosher, who referenced Joshua Chapter 4 of the Old Testament to

highlight the importance of monuments in remembering the past.

According to Bosher, through the story of Joshua and the stones of remembrance pulled from the Jordan River, God commanded that the Confederates also make memorials of stones.

Bosher said this in light of Confederate monuments that are being removed and replaced in other parts of the South.

Today, many descendants of Confederates feel that their cultural heritage is under attack, including the very celebration of Confederate Memorial Day.

This year marks the second year in a row that the state calendar has read "State Holiday" in place of "Confederate Memorial Day," and the numbers of participants in such events seem to be shrinking.

As remarked by Ledford at the beginning of

the Memorial Day Service, honoring the Confederate dead with Confederate Memorial Day is a way for the living to remember their veteran ancestors.

"We gather in the spirit not to offend people, not to make political statements," said Ledford. "We come simply to honor those who gave the last, full sacrifice to their fellow neighbors, friends, countrymen, and that is altogether fitting and appropriate."

"No matter the conflict, no matter how long ago the conflict was, it is altogether a fitting and appropriate message to send to all veterans, past, present and even future, that no matter what, no matter how long, they will be remembered."

"In that spirit, we're here to do just that - remember the brave men and boys who charged into battle against very heavy odds, and fought and fought and fought until there was just nothing left to fight with."

Saturday's memorial service included pledges to both the American and Georgia flags, a salute to the Confederate flag, a recitation of the Charge of Lt. Gen. Stephen Dill Lee, the placing of a memorial wreath at the Confederate Monument inside the Union County War Memorial, as well as a removal of the Confederate battle flag from the monument.

In closing, Camp Piper Richard Smith performed "Amazing Grace," while Compatriot Mike Kirkland fired a triple volley cannon salute.

After the ceremony, Camp Cmdr. David Junghans held a plaque dedication at the gravesite of Confederate Johnson P. Wellborn in the Old Blairsville Cemetery.

Wellborn was a local farmer who died in the midst of the Civil War, but who served as one of two Union County delegates to Georgia's January 1861 Secession Convention in Milledgeville.

The other Union County delegate to the Secession Convention was James H.

Huggins, who is buried in Athens. Huggins commanded the Confederate 23rd Georgia Volunteer Infantry Regiment.

Both the Sons of

Confederate Veterans and the United Daughters of the Confederacy local chapters enjoy membership in Union and Towns counties, the latter

of which was formed from parts of Union and Rabun counties some five years before the start of the Civil War.



Ann Atchison and Barbara Junghans of the United Daughters of the Confederacy Smith's Legion Chapter 2699, placing the wreath at the Confederate monument. Photo/Lowell Nicholson



Mike Kirkland with the annual cannon salute. Photo/Lowell Nicholson



Cmdr. David Junghans of the Sons of Confederate Veterans David W. Payne Camp 1633, giving a plaque dedication for Johnson P. Wellborn in the Old Blairsville Cemetery. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

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