

# Remember ...continued from Page 1A

were fired at Lexington and Concord to begin our Revolutionary War, American men and women have been answering their nation's call to duty, Lt. Col. White said.

"More than 1 million Americans have fought and died on battlefields here and abroad to defend our freedom and our way of life," he said. "Today, our troops continue to make the ultimate sacrifice. And even as we lose troops, more brave Americans are stepping forward to say, 'I am ready to serve.' They follow in footsteps of many fine Americans such as yourselves.

"For the brave men and women, who have laid down their lives, we say thank you," he said. "This November marks the 150th Anniversary of the Gettysburg Address. We should not wait until then, to reacquire ourselves with Lincoln's words that he uttered a century and a half ago at the site of the bloodiest battle in American history.

"The speech Lincoln gave that day is the most poignant and moving tribute given to our nation's fallen warriors that has ever been delivered in our nation's his-



tory," Lt. Col. White said.

Lt. Col. White asked the men and women, who served their country to rise and stand before the crowd.

"Thank you for the services to your country," he said. "Thank you for answering your call to duty. You made our Armed Forces the most respected in this entire World."

Chuck Honaker, a decorated Iraq War Veteran, emceed the event.

Honaker was seriously wounded Aug. 20th, 2003 when an improvised explo-



Veteran Bud Akins has the honor of driving the parade's Grand Marshalls, Clyde and I.T. Harkins of Suches. Photos/Lowell Nicholson

sive device detonated near the Humvee driven by Staff Sgt. Bobby Franklin in Iraq.

Honaker was manning the turret, or mounted weaponry. Franklin, of Mineral Bluff, died from injuries sustained in the explosion.

Honaker suffered numerous shrapnel wounds, and his hearing was damaged.

"Bobby Franklin lived with his family in Mineral Bluff," Honaker said. "He worked here in Blairsville (Colwell Detention Center). Though he didn't live here, we lost one of our own that

burning day in August 2003."

Honaker was humbled by the turnout for the event.

"I'd like to thank each of you for coming out here today, for taking the time to honor the memory and sacrifice of those that have given their lives to defend our freedom," Honaker said.

"One of the ways that we can honor those veterans who have paid the ultimate price for freedom, is to live our lives to the fullest," he said. "To live our lives serving, and serving others. Thank you."

