



COURTESY PHOTOS

Members of the American Legion Post 57 salute during Saturday's Wreaths Across America ceremony in Olustee Park.

## Legion honors fallen comrades with Wreaths Across America

Staff report

American Legion Post 57 participated in a Wreaths Across America ceremony Saturday morning in Olustee Park where they honored fallen veterans from different military branches.

The event featured an Honor Guard as well as several veterans paying homage to their fallen comrades.

The mission of the event was to remember the fallen, honor those that serve and their families and teach the next generation the value of freedom.

During the ceremony wreaths were laid in memory of those who served and are serving in the United States Army, United States Marine Corps, United States Navy, United States Air Force, United States Coast Guard and United States Merchant Marines.

A wreath was also laid in honor of those serving in the United States Space Force as well as a veterans wreath laid in honor of the 92,129 United States service men from all branches of the service whose last known status was either

Prisoners of War or Missing in Action. Those individuals have never returned to their families and homes.

Kelly Valliere, First Vice Commander, Columbia County American Legion Post 57, noted that they were not there to decorate graves, but to remember not their deaths, but their lives and each wreath is a gift of appreciation from a grateful America.

"These live balsam fir wreaths symbolize honor to those who have served and are serving in the armed forces of our great nation and to their families who endure sacrifices every day on our behalf," she said. "To our children, we want you to understand that the freedoms you enjoy today have not been free but have come with a cost that someday, you may have to pay yourself. As a nation standing together, we can defeat terrorism, hatred and injustice. Thanks to our Veterans, we have the freedom to do just that."

The Honor Guard conducted a three-round volley and Taps was played to end the ceremony.



Wreaths were laid Saturday for those who served in the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, Merchant Marines and Space Force.