

# The Wall...from Page 1A

The Moving Wall is expected to arrive at 9:15 a.m. on Oct. 8, and will be erected at 9:30 a.m.

An Opening Ceremony has been planned for 3 p.m. that Thursday, featuring Keynote Speaker Captain Tommy Clack (Ret.) U.S. Army.

A morning service will be held at 9:30 a.m. on Sunday, Oct. 11, and on Monday, Oct. 12, students from Union County Schools will be visiting the memorial throughout the morning.

The Quilts of Valor Foundation will be holding a special ceremony at The Moving Wall that Monday, where it will present 20 quilts to area veterans, and a Closing Ceremony for The Moving Wall will take place later that day at 1 p.m. on Monday, Oct. 12.

Bringing The Moving Wall to town has been no small feat, as preparation for the event started a year ago.

Mike Priven, president of the Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 1101, said that he and the VVA started calling the caretakers of The Moving Wall in September 2014.

Usually it takes about two years of advance notice to book The Moving Wall, but thanks to a cancellation and persistence from

the VVA and its members, Priven said they received word last December that The Moving Wall would be coming to town this Oct. 8.

Logistic work began on the project earlier this year in January, and thanks to the overwhelming financial support of the community at large, through donations as well as ad sales in its Moving Wall Memorial Keepsake booklet, the VVA was able to cover the total cost of the project.

"The reason for this wall – this is going to be our Welcome Home to ourselves," said Priven, a Vietnam Veteran. "We wanted to make sure that we got a welcome home, and the community has been amazing as far as backing us on this one, it really has. I don't think we could live in a better place."

"We're still a small community, but we've had amazing support. This is no small undertaking. We didn't know what this was going to be, but this was about a \$35,000 venture, way above anything we thought it was going to be."

The Moving Wall will be free to the public at Meeks Park, and the VVA will provide paper and crayons to those who wish to

make rubbings of names on the wall to take home as keepsakes of remembrance for the great sacrifices made by those brave enough to serve their country.

Guards will be posted around the clock while the memorial is in town, with more than 100 local volunteers and VVA members planning to stand watch over the monument.

The VVA had 15,000 copies of its Moving Wall Memorial Keepsake booklet printed up to match the expected turnout of those who will be paying their respects to the honored dead and missing.

Each booklet contains insight into the Vietnam War, its history, effects and aftereffects, as well as information about the scheduled programs at Meeks Park.

"This is a war like no other war that this country has ever fought, and the people who took the brunt of it were the troops that were involved," said Priven of the Vietnam War. "When we came home, we really had a problem – there were troops who were told not to wear their uniforms home."

The impact of the Vietnam War lives on today, in veterans facing both the psychological trauma of a war that was considered then and in retrospect a war the United States had no business waging, as

well as the physical toll taken on many veterans exposed to Agent Orange.

And for many visiting the memorial, The Moving Wall will offer a time of reverence and contemplation, as visitors young and old alike will see themselves mirrored back in the black granite of the wall, a reflection of today containing the history of a painful

time in America's past.

"For us, and I think for the community, I can't tell you how many people have come up to me and said, 'I'll never get to see this in Washington D.C. – I'm just so glad you're bringing it here,'" said Priven of The Wall in the nation's capital.

"And the fact that many of our guys have never been to Wash-

ington and never will, and they're getting to see it, it's really turning out to be a big thing," continued Priven. "You can't understand The Moving Wall until you understand The Wall, and you can't understand the Wall until you understand the war. And that is right on target, that's really what it's all about. If you don't understand the war, you don't understand the Wall."

# Sorghum...from Page 1A

History Channel's Alone survival TV series – will be Grand Marshal at this 46th annual parade, which begins at 11 a.m. at the Old Middle School Gym on Saturday, Oct. 10, and finishes at the festival in Meeks Park.

The parade offers community churches, civic groups and businesses a unique way to raise money or give to charity, as cash prizes are handed out to winning floats.

Games begin after the parade, and festivalgoers 16 years and older can compete in the ever popular "Biskit Eatin' Contest," with other games to follow.

Parking is free, and admission into the festival is only \$4 each day. Children 12 and under get in free, and both active and retired military personnel also get in free with a military ID.

The Sorghum Festival at Meeks Park opens at 9 a.m. on both Saturday, Oct. 10, and Sunday, Oct. 11, and closes each day at 5 p.m.

The very next weekend, the Sorghum Festival opens again at 9 a.m. on both Saturday, Oct. 17, and Sunday, Oct. 18, closing festivities at the park again at 5 p.m.

As always, there will be a Square Dance each Saturday of the festival, where those who are light on their feet can do-si-do from 8 p.m. until 11 p.m. at the Old Middle School Gym.

Sorghum syrup, featured as the festival's name-

sake, will be made right there at Meeks Park, and the festival will also feature wares by soap makers, jewelry makers, candle makers, quilt makers, apron makers, arts and crafts of a great many varieties, and to top it all, rich and delicious foods will all be available and more.

The Sorghum Festival acts as a community fundraiser of sorts, as civic and school groups are invited to take part in the festival with their own booths.

The Union County High School Diamond Club, the baseball team's booster

club, will be cooking and selling Boston butts, and other student-oriented clubs, such as the Union County FFA and 4-H, are encouraged to participate to learn about mountain heritage.

Apart from all the vendors and games, live music, which has been a staple at the Sorghum Festival over the years, will play a key part in the festivities throughout both weekends.

An entire event schedule, as well as parade guidelines, can be found at [www.blairsvillesorghumfestival.com](http://www.blairsvillesorghumfestival.com).



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