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Rain didn't dampen patriotic spirit  
*Residents gather downtown for Armed Forces Day parade*

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By Cheryl Allen  
STAFF WRITER

Despite early morning rain and lingering clouds, the sixth annual Armed Forces Day Parade went off as planned Saturday in downtown Greenville.

The sun came out near the end of the parade, just in time for a ceremony at City Hall Plaza.

"I'm just glad it turned out to be a good day," said Gina Jordahl of Greenville.

She was especially pleased for her 10-year-old son, Jeremy, who was waving a handful of small American flags.

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"He was really upset because he thought it was going to rain the parade out," Jordahl said.

The sun finally peaked from behind the thinning clouds as clusters of veterans, reservists and local first responders marched down Main Street. Flag-waving spectators, many with digital cameras, cheered them on.

The parade also featured local Girl Scout troops, marching bands, ROTC units from Greenville County Schools and local and state officials. Military aircraft flew proudly and loudly over Main Street.

Marian Kolas stepped outside of Twigs, where she works, to check things out.

"I had to come out and support the troops," she said. "No matter what our political views are, we need to support our troops."

Manuel Figueroa of Greenville came with his 2-year-old son, David, who was dressed in an Army jacket and hat. Figueroa said he'd never attended a military parade before and was glad he came.


"It was great. It was very moving and tear jerking because of what we lived through the past five years," said Figueroa, citing the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks and the war in Iraq.

Rep. Bob Inglis (R-S.C.) told the crowd the parade was insufficient for truly honoring those serving in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"But we do what we can to thank those who have volunteered to interpose their very lives between us and those who would destroy freedom," he said.

The keynote speaker was Col. Paul Curlett, special assistant to the wing commander of the Charleston Air Force Base. The ceremony also featured musical performances by Greenville County students, a color guard presentation by the Furman University ROTC and a 21-gun salute by the Charles F. Grady Jr. VFW Post 6734.

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