



Several local veterans attended the annual A-HGS Veterans Day program on Friday, November 10, at the Grade School gymnasium.



Stars and Stripes Reporters interviewed two veterans and gave special reports at the Veterans Day program. They were, left to right, Veteran Daniel Ward, Casey Benedict, Trent Yoder and Veteran Don Gerkin.



Students who participated in the Veterans Day program included, left to right: Makayla Harshbarger, Chance Lindstrom, Ashlynn Gingerich, Dustee Rose Gregory, Bella Taylor and Savannah Butcher.



The Veterans Day program was planned by the Veterans Day Americanism Committee: left to right, Bev Obert, Edie Brandenburg, Paul Quick, Kathy Caraway with Dorothy Clough, President of the American Legion Auxiliary. Not pictured: Marsha Burgener. They were assisted by the A-HGS faculty members.



The Atwood American Legion Auxiliary served 52 veterans and spouses lunch at the Legion Home following the Veterans Day program on Friday, November 10.

Veterans Day program at ALAH High School

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up on the program to introduce the guest speaker, Tim Kohlbecker.

Kohlbecker, of Tuscola, talked about his work with veterans through the Department of Veterans Affairs at various VA facilities. He talked mostly about counseling those suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder commonly referred to by the acronym PTSD.

He shared several anecdotes about interacting with veterans over the years which were humorous, touching and gut wrenching. He explained that everyone who serves either in combat or non-combat roles will leave the military with some level of impact on their lives.

He also addressed the non-veterans in attendance about how to speak to a veteran about their service and that the best way to do that was be a good listener. He explained that different veterans will be willing to share their stories, if at all, in different ways and at different times. He advised let them make that determination on when, how and if that will come about.

After the speech, it was the Junior High chorus up next singing "Thank You Soldiers". FFA Officer Makenna Green recognized current soldiers who are



The Arthur Lovington Atwood Hammond FFA chapter was the host for the Veterans Day ceremonies held at the high school on Friday, November 10. FFA members shown here during the Presentation of Colors are Katie Gingerich, Zane Crist, Taylor Powell and Makenna Green. Photo Kent A. Stock.

serving and led those assembled in a moment of silence.

The ALAH band and chorus performed "An American Celebration" together followed by the Arthur

Grade School Kindergarten classes leading the audience in The Pledge of Allegiance.

The ALAH FFA members then retired the colors while Taps was played by band members Nisa Asghar and

Forces" and veterans stood when the song for their branch of the service was played.

Prior to the ceremony,

Casey interviewed Daniel Ward and Trent talked with Don Gerkin. Casey stated,

"When I met with United States Marine Corps Veteran Daniel Ward, he gave me some interesting advice. He told me: 'Be willing to fail.' He said that joining the military was not easy and he told me that in order to be successful, I would have to 'push myself and make myself uncomfortable.' In other words, I think he was telling me to face my challenges head on." Mr. Ward joined the United States Marine Corps in 1993 and served until 1997. The crowd enjoyed his report and congratulates Daniel Ward for his service.

Trent had the privilege to interview Vietnam War Veteran Don Gerkin. He served in the United States Marine Corps for three years, from 1969 to 1972. He was stationed at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii with the Fleet Marine Force. Veteran Gerkin told Trent one of the most memorable experiences he recalls from his time in the Marines was when he got to stand on the turret of the USS Arizona that was sunk on December 7, 1941 at Pearl Harbor and play echo taps to another Marine who was on Ford Island during the ceremony when Japanese and American Veterans met for the first time. He also was present when the astronauts returned from Apollo 14 and 15 space missions. Mr. Gerkin's advice for the younger generations is "You should always respect your country

Kolby Rickman.

The ALAH FCCLA and Commercial Food classes provided refreshment to veterans and their guests after the ceremony.

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and the people who provide the freedom and privileges of living in the United States."

Beverly Obert, a member of the Veterans Day Americanism Committee, thanked everyone, students, teachers and staff, who helped in any way with the program and thanked the students for writing the invitations to the veterans.

Mrs. Mulvaney was thanked for rearranging the curriculum to assist the students in creating their t-shirt designs. A total of 80 different designs were submitted. The t-shirt design contest is held each year and a winner chosen for special shirts for the presenters to wear. Winners this year were Fourth Grader Dustee Rose Gregory and sixth grader Ashlynn Gingerich. These students presented a t-shirt to the three World War II veterans in attendance, Robert Wolfe, George Logsdon and Paul Quick.

Music was also presented by K-2nd grade: "You're a Grand Old Flag," 3rd and 4th grade: "God Bless the USA," and 5th grade and Jr. High Choir "We Are America," all directed by Ms. Tina Nuckols.

The program ended with the retiring of the colors and playing of taps and echo by Makayla Harshbarger and Chance Lindstrom.

Following the program, the American Legion Auxiliary served lunch to 52 veterans and spouses at the Legion Home. The Veterans Day Americanism committee consisted of Paul Quick, Kathy Caraway, Beverly Obert, Edie Brandenburg and Marsha Burgener, assisted by A-HGS faculty members and the A-H Public Library.