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Timmons students honor veterans

By JOAN DEMIRJIAN

Timmons Elementary students honored veterans Nov. 11 in a program that has become tradition at Kenston schools. Throughout the school, stars hung from the ceilings bearing photos and names of people who have served this country.

DeAnna Buchanan started the annual third-grade Veterans Day program and now Linda Nutter, herself a U.S. Army veteran, coordinates the event.

It started with a patriotic musical program in the gymnasium serenading guest parents and veterans. As in past years, the gym was filled to capacity.

They honored the memories of veterans including James W. Simms Sr., ship cook with the USS Franklin CV 13 in the U.S. Navy from 1944 to 1946, who regularly attended past programs and died recently as well as Murrery Mehlman, a captain and fighter pilot in the U.S. Air Force in World War II.

The third-grade students then went to the third-grade pod to listen to seven veterans. Marlene Remias, a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army, was master of ceremonies.

"They understand it is something bigger than them and that they enjoy their freedom because someone else sacrificed for us," Katy McGrath, district communications spokeswoman, said.

The third-graders sat around at the feet of the veterans, listening attentively as they spoke.

Anthony Barille was a sergeant in the U.S. Army from 1967 to 1969 and served in Vietnam. Last week's event was his third one, he said in an introductory to the program.

He has done it for each of his grandchildren who attend Kenston schools. It is a special program for students to recognize service in the military, he said. It gives them an idea of patriotism.

"It's a neat program," he said. "They take the time to bring in veterans. It's the special treatment that many schools don't do."

He enjoys telling the story of being in South Vietnam. He was given rations for a meal with cans of food. As they were riding to their destination one day, there was a group of Vietnam children who were hungry. He picked up a container with white bread. The container was dated 1945 and was 25 years old, he noted. He tossed it to a boy, and the boy threw it back, hitting his helmet, he recalled.

Rick Ritt, father of one of the students, served in the U.S. Marine Corps from 1990 to 1995, serving tours in Okinawa, Japan and Africa. "It was probably the best five years of my life," he said.

James Anderson was a Petty Officer 2nd Class in the U.S. Navy, from 1968 to 1972. At the program last week, he called up his grandson Jackson from the group of students. He placed the helmet they wore while at sea on his grandson to show the other students. It protected their ears while on deck.

It was his first time at the program. He has always been interested in history "and this younger generation needs to know history," he said.

Al Body served in Vietnam on the USS Little Rock in the U.S. Navy from 1965 to 1969. He showed photos of his ship.

Linda Nutter, a second-grade teacher at Timmons, went through the ROTC program at Kent State University. She was in the U.S. Army. Her parents could not afford to send her through college and she helped pay her own way. Her father and brothers served, she said, noting "My dad was my biggest hero." He always said, "Get a good education and work hard," she noted.



Veterans spoke to students about their military experiences during a Veterans Day event Nov. 11 hosted by third-graders at Kenston's Timmons Elementary School. U.S. Navy veteran James Anderson shows off the helmet he wore using his grandson Jackson as a model.

"It's an honor to listen to the veterans and what they do," Mrs. Nutter said. It is something the children must be taught and what the veterans have given.

Larry Mansfield was the acting supply sergeant in the U.S. Army, serving from 1957 to 1959. He was drafted. He told how they took showers with their clothes on and then hung them up to dry and wore them for another week.

He told how World War II began with Adolph Hitler wanting to "rule the world." His own uncle was shot in the Battle of the Bulge. "World War II was something I hope we never see again."

Teacher Gail Hastings said the school has done it many years. The third-graders are able to appreciate the importance of honoring the veterans.

Mrs. Remias gave the students a quick lesson in standing at attention and saluting the flag, then standing at rest. They were called to attention again and recited the pledge of allegiance.

Richard "Doc" Schaedler served in the Navy Marines from 1962 to 1966 as E-3 Medical. His grandson is a student at Timmons. "I'm very proud to have served," he said. He joined the Navy and went through the Hospital Corpsman School and was sent to the Marine Corp.