

Mount Vernon Signal

Second Section

Thursday, November 13, 2003



Cub Scouts Pack 263 of Mt. Vernon honored fallen Veterans in a Veterans Day ceremony on November 9th at the War Memorial in front of the courthouse. Those that attended are from front row from left: Tristen Girard, Roy Scott Westwood, Austin Harries, Tommy Philbeck and Jonathan Sower. Second row from left: Shirley Dickerson - Webelos leader, Jonathan Alexander, J.D. Morgan, Mark Adgerson, Brian Bishop, Charles Cornelius and Jeff Harless - Tiger Cub leader. Back row from left: Eric Walker - Wolf Cub leader and Jesse Morgan - Cub Master. Photo by Terri Morgan - Assistant Cub Master.

Soldier helps BES observe Veterans' Day on Tuesday

Broadhead Elementary School decided there was no better way to observe Veterans Day than by meeting a soldier - a very special soldier.

Students in Mrs. Kathy Dyehouse's class at Broadhead were visited on Tuesday, November 11 by Rob Hendrickson, son of Dr. and Mrs. R.F. Hendrickson of Danville and formerly of Broadhead. Rob's grandparents,

Mr. and Mrs. Bob Hendrickson were also former residents of Broadhead.

Since January, students have been communicating with Rob, who was stationed with his reserve unit in Iraq, and continued to write him until his return home in September.

On Tuesday, Veterans Day, the students got to meet and talk with Rob and honored him with a reception. As he was leaving the

school, red, white and blue balloons were released in honor of him, his service to our country, all other service people and our freedom.

The school and students are very appreciative of Rob and his family for taking the time to come to their school to meet them, and they also want to thank everyone who helped with this special event.

Veterans' Day recognized at Rockcastle High School

Sgt. Major Keith Taylor is speaker

Prior to the ceremony honoring Cody Alexander for being chosen a national finalist for the Wendy's High School Heisman Award, students at Rockcastle County High School heard a speech by Sgt. Maj. Keith Taylor, director of the ROTC program at the school, in honor of Veterans Day.

In his speech, Taylor noted that this was the fifth anniversary of the celebration of Veterans Day and noted that November 11th was chosen because World War II was over on the 11th day of the 11th month at the 11th hour. The day was originally organized by Raymond Weeks of Birmingham,

Alabama as a parade to honor local veterans who survived WWII. President Dwight Eisenhower later signed a bill officially changing Armistice Day to Veterans Day in 1954.

SGM Taylor told the students that he tends to think of friends and acquaintances who lost their lives, in one way or another, in the performance of their duties. Taylor also told the students, "I am more proud of being a veteran than I can ever explain. I am also proud of the service members that are in the Middle East this very moment fighting for our security and have prayed many times to be able to join them to help in some way. Those men and women are also veterans and I pray for their safe return. And, if they must die, then I hope this

country has the courage to see this task that they gave their lives to complete. Please God, don't let our citizens fail this God."

Taylor also said, "It's not just the soldiers fighting that deserve our thanks. Remember the drill sergeant, who might never see combat, who taught the soldiers fighting how to survive on the battlefield and accomplish their mission. Or the supply clerk who makes sure that the combat troops have what they need. And, don't forget the local National Guard, who is always there to help during natural disasters or who, lately, are called upon to serve alongside regular duty soldiers in combat. They're all veterans and deserve your respect."

Veterans' Day was Tuesday

Many have sacrificed for the freedoms we enjoy

By: Richard Anderkin
Tuesday the United States celebrated Veterans' Day. It was a day that all veterans should have stood up and took a bow.

Several Rockcastle Countians are among the fighting men and women in Iraq and Afghanistan and other places in the world and although many Americans disagree with the fact that our troops are in harm's way, we should thank them and the men and women who have gone before them.

Tuesday when we were trying to shake sure that no celebration was being held that we needed to report on, and there were none. I then thought of a 1989 article in this publication, written by a former employee, Jim Griesch, in respect for our veterans. He was also a veteran.

All of the stories he wrote were, in my humble opinion, very good, and a real tribute to the people who have served our country, in order for us to have freedoms we enjoy.

Some of those veterans are now gone, but we thought it was appropriate to re-run their stories. Some of the following stories have been rewritten to a certain extent.

Alvin Carpenter World War I

In 1899 he was the only living veteran of World War I and he was proud of his service to his country.

Well he should have been. This is his story. Carpenter went to France in 1917 as part of America's First Division with General John Pershing, part of the 28th Infantry.

His outfit was based near Chateau Thierry and he fought in the Argonne Forest.

It was there Carpenter was slightly injured by a mustard gas on a hand, and more seriously wounded by flying shrapnel.

"I have got seven pieces of shrapnel in me," Mr. Carpenter told the Signal.

Carpenter was one of those who would end up living in one of those terrible, muddy, dirty, trenches which face each other from across barren fields of the French countryside.

"It was rough," he said. "A bad life."

Did Mr. Carpenter feel like a hero? Did he feel like a hero when he sailed for Europe, amidst a sea of

women waving to the men marching the rails of the ocean liners turned transports?

"No," he said of 1917. "I just did my part," he said.

Mr. Carpenter died in 1991 at the age of 96, the last veteran of World War I in Rockcastle County.

Elmer Alcorn World War II

Elmer Alcorn fought through the "Green Hell" of New Guinea and on the Philippines under Gen. Douglas MacArthur.

He was with the Sixth Army, 24th Division.

"It was a rough road to the Philippines," Alcorn remembered 45 years later. "It was step by step from Port Moresby."

Foremost in Alcorn's memory was the battles for Hollandia, toward the western end of New Guinea, and the landing on Leyte, which began the liberation of the Philippines.

He didn't call New Guinea the "Green Hell" but he did say it was "bad enough."

Hollandia was one of the most masterful assaults of the second World War.

"We acted like we were going to land on another island, Los Negros," Alcorn told Griesch. "The Japanese moved out from Hollandia and there weren't many left," he said.

While the battle was low-key in terms of killed and wounded, it proved to be an important step toward the taking of the Philippines.

Mr. Alcorn, who has several family members in the county died on April 1, of 1994. He was 76.

Floyd Baker Korean War

Floyd Baker, of Mt. Vernon, is a Korean War Veteran and is and has been very active in the local VFW, at one point serving as Commander of the Post.

Mr. Baker is one of several Rockcastle County veterans from Rockcastle County.

His whole three years of service were spent during the Korean War.

Baker served in combat as a rifleman with the First Cavalry Division.

He spent nine months on his first tour, then three months to complete a year after some time in Japan.

He saw action at Inchon, but after the May 1951, landing, mas-

tered minded by Gen. Douglas MacArthur, Baker spent the entire winter of 1951-52 on the ground in Korea.

"It was bitter cold in January and February of 1952," he said.

"At times it was minus 20 degrees and stayed that cold for the most part," he continued.

As a rifleman, he remembers that he slept outside. "We didn't go inside. I spent one year of my life sleeping out in a foxhole," he recalled.

Mr. Baker still resides in Mt. Vernon.

Mike Hansel Vietnam War

Hansel is a combat veteran who spent seven months out in the bush and boonocks of Vietnam, doing all of the dirty tough jobs asked of Americans during the 10 years of actual war in that country.

He was there in 1969 and 70 as part of the 25th Infantry. His main weapon was an M-16, and his wits.

Hansel walked "the point" on many patrols, but owes his life to one time he did not.

"We had been celebrating a little the night before," Hansel recalled. "I was sleeping pretty late, and there was a road sweep planned for that morning."

A friend volunteered to take the point for Hansel.

Nobody in that patrol came back without at least a wound. Hansel's replacement never came back.

"The whole platoon was hit, and several were killed," he recalled.

"Most were real good friends of mine," Hansel said. "I don't know if many of them lived or not," he said.

That was on Christmas Eve of 1969, and the incident left a permanent impression on Mike. He named his son Pat, 33, for a man he knew on that patrol.

Mike Hansel is 54, lives in Mt. Vernon and is an executive with Hannag Aggregate.

Appropriate Words

(Editor's Note) We have many Rockcastle Countians who are serving in the armed services and should be remembered. We have had several return home safely but may have to return to Iraq. Luckily none of them, as far as we know, have been killed. We are thankful and appreciative of their efforts.

Sgt. Major Keith Taylor, who heads the JROTC program at RCHS summed up the sacrifices of our soldiers on Monday during a ceremony at the school.

At the end of his speech SGM Taylor read the following poem to the students:

It's the veteran, not the preacher, who has given us freedom of religion.

It's the veteran, not the reporter, who has given us freedom of press.

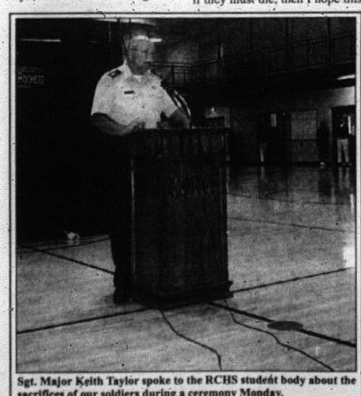
It's the veteran, not the poet, who has given us freedom of speech.

It's the veteran, not the campus organizer, who has given us the freedom to assemble.

It's the veteran, not the lawyer, who has given us the right to a fair trial.

It's the veteran, not the politician, who has given us the right to vote.

It's the veteran, who salutes the flag, whose coffin will be draped by the flag, who gives the protester the right to burn the flag.



Sgt. Major Keith Taylor spoke to the RCHS student body about the sacrifices of our soldiers during a ceremony Monday.



Mrs. Kathy Dyehouse, teacher at Broadhead Elementary School, and class members for the past two years, welcomed Rob Hendrickson of Danville as a speaker for the children's Veterans' Day observance. Hendrickson recently returned from Iraq and has been communicating with Mrs. Dyehouse's class for some time. Rob is the son of Dr. and Mrs. Finley Hendrickson, former residents of Broadhead, and the grandson of the late Mr. and Mrs. Bob Hendrickson also of Broadhead.