

## HHS remembers all veterans on 11/11/11

Written by Chris Lee

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Veterans Day is a day to remember those who have and are currently serving the United States of America. This year was no different. Holyoke students filled the auditorium Friday, Nov. 11 to honor and remember every United States veteran.

Ten students began the program by presenting the colors. Nearly half of the students chosen to present the flags were seniors who attended either Boys or Girls State as juniors last year. Others presenting the colors were National Honor Society members or class representatives.

Steve Millage introduced the four winners in the Voice of Democracy contest. Earning first place was Jeremy Loutensock of Holyoke. Matt Wilcox of Haxtun took second place followed by Ben Martinez and Trevor Dalton, both of Holyoke, third and fourth respectively. All four boys read their speeches which looked into troops and whether or not there is pride in serving in the military.



**Winners giving Voice of Democracy speeches during the Veterans Day program are pictured from left, Ben Martinez, Jeremy Loutensock, Trevor Dalton and Matt Wilcox. [Click here to read their speeches.](#)**

—Enterprise photo

Millage addressed the crowd, encouraging students to consider thinking about attending annual Boys and Girls State conferences. He also took a special moment to thank the students of Holyoke. He said numerous local veterans have told him they received thank you comments from many area students for the veterans' participation in the community—such as in parades and ball games.

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“I want to let you guys know that it gives us a warm feeling when you do that,” Millage said. “We appreciate it.”

After a recent trip to Washington, D.C. for an annual reunion with his Vietnam “buddies,” Millage learned something he previously hadn’t. He decided to share his story with Holyoke students during last Friday’s Veterans Day program.

He said he had never been to D.C. before and said it was a wonderful experience seeing the Vietnam Wall and World War II Memorial. “It was just overwhelming, all the things we got to see.”

Something he didn’t know prior to his trip was that Arlington Cemetery was part of General Robert E. Lee’s estate. There were 1,100 acres with a nice mansion on top of the hill in Virginia just across the Potomac River from Washington, D.C.



When tensions were rising between the north and the south, Lee resigned from the Union Army and offered his services to the Southern Army down in Richmond.

He resigned April 20, 1861 and shortly after, his wife left on May 15. At first, his wife wanted to stay and defend the house during the almost certain upcoming war.

On May 23, Virginia voted to secede from the Union and within hours 14,000 troops came across the river and took over the house and estate. The Union troops didn’t like Lee and used the property as a command headquarters. As the war went on, cemeteries were filling up, so they decided to break up the estate and use it as burial grounds.

Two years later, Lee was commanding 75,000 troops and he decided to head north to try to end the war.

Millage explained how Lee's 75,000 troops met up with the Union's 90,000 troops at Gettysburg, Pa. He explained he visited Gettysburg on his recent trip to D.C. "Gettysburg is about the size of Holyoke," Millage said.

He described how the battleground has been kept basically the same as it was in 1863.

"It was a devastating defeat for Robert E. Lee," Millage said. Actually both armies suffered tremendously during this battle."

Millage reminded students how more Americans were lost in that battle than any other battle America has had. After the battle, 53,000 were lost. Millage said roughly 58,000 were lost in the 15 years of the Vietnam War.

He also spoke of his visit and how he saw numerous school groups touring the city. He happened to see Bob and Elizabeth Dole who were meeting a Freedom Flight of WWII veterans.

Millage said Dole had gotten out of the hospital only a day earlier and was out meeting with veterans. He even took time to shake hands and meet with Millage's group.

Millage finished by encouraging the students to visit the nation's capital to visit the monuments to remember the different wars.

"It's something I'll never, never forget," Millage said.

Holyoke's Select Choir, under the direction of Marcia Dalton, led the singing of The Star Spangled Banner followed by God Bless America played by the Holyoke High School band under the direction of Shauna Close.

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Holyoke fifth-graders sang We Will Not Forget and FFA members presented a board signed by students in honor of veterans.

To conclude last Friday's program, Taps was played by Jack Wieland.



**FFA members Andrew Kent and Wyatt Bishop unveil a board signed by students at the conclusion of the Veterans Day program Friday, Nov. 11. FFA members organized the project to help honor veterans. □ □**  
—Enterprise photo



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**Holyoke fifth graders sang “We Will Not Forget” during the Veterans Day program held at HHS last Friday.☐☐**

**—Enterprise photo**

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