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Educational Enrichment for Young Patriots
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Memorial Day Observance at Riverview Elementary School Teaches Students the Meaning of Sacrifice

On May 27, 2011, approximately 600 students at the Spotsylvania County Riverview Elementary School walked away with a much better understanding of what “sacrifice” means. In observance of Memorial Day 2011, numerous historical demonstrators from various periods in American history provided interactive displays, and reinforced by static US Army aviation and ground equipment displays, in order to drive home the required VA Standard of Learning (SOL); recognizing that Memorial Day honors people who served to protect the country’s freedoms, and how people can serve the community, state, and nation. Spotsylvania County School board officials also attended the observance, praising the displays as offering great value outside the classroom.

The principal of Riverview Elementary, Mrs. Dianne Holmes, thinks outside the box when it comes to making education more appealing. According to Holmes, “Recognizing opportunities for alternative methods of education can have a great impact. Often, these opportunities are right here in our local communities. Several historical demonstrators are the parents of students in our schools.”

Among the historical demonstrators was the Quantico-stationed, US Marine Lieutenant Colonel Michael Landree, an artillery officer who completed two tours in Iraq, but who took the day off from work to strum a banjo while impersonating a Confederate Officer of the 30th Virginia Volunteer Infantry Regiment. The 30th Virginia was raised for service in the Confederate States Army during the American Civil War, and consisted of men from Fredericksburg and the counties of Spotsylvania, Caroline, Stafford, and King George. A Confederate female spy, demonstrated by Allison Forney of Fredericksburg, explained to students the risk and courage associated with smuggling information and badly needed medical supplies through Union lines. Phillip Gibbons, a retired US Marine from Linden, VA, and Jeff Jordan, an attorney from Fairfax, VA, provided displays of Confederate and Union cavalry troops. Brian Petruskie, a veterinarian from Oak Grove, VA, provided a horse-soldier display from the Punitive Expedition dating from around 1916. Mr. Glenn Hyatt, a retired finance officer from the Department of Defense Schools of Fredericksburg, VA, represented World War I and discussed the first use of science in warfare. Dieter Stenger, also of Fredericksburg, represented the 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment during World War II.

The US Army provided a Presidential Gun Battery from the 3rd Infantry Regiment “Old Guard”, stationed at Fort Myer, Washington DC, which sported a World War II 90mm anti-tank gun towed by the current 2.5-ton Light Medium Tactical Vehicle (LMTV). Punctually at 1000AM, the relatively new US Army LUH-72 Lakota helicopter landed on the back field, which was piloted by US Army Captain Courtney Kiluk, from the 12th Aviation Battalion, Fort Belvoir, VA. Many of the younger students were encouraged to see a female pilot and several young girls were heard saying, “Oh wow! I would love to be a pilot in the Army!”

At no cost to the school, the observance was organized by the Educational Enrichment for Young Patriots, Inc. (EEYP), a local 501(c)3 non-profit corporation that helps students better understand history through the achievements of great leaders in our nation’s past, and empowers students to become leaders in their school and community. EEYP is eligible to receive charitable contributions from VA residents and businesses that are tax deductible under the law.



Other enrichment opportunities are available to Spotsylvania County elementary schools, to include a Kindergarten enrichment about George Washington and Betsy Ross, a first grade enrichment about Christopher Columbus, and a second grade enrichment about John Smith and Pocahontas. Details about EEYP can be found online at <http://www.educationalenrichment.org>.

Left: US Marine LtCol Michael Landree, a Confederate officer of the 30th Virginia Volunteer Infantry Regiment, and Allison Forney, a Confederate spy, brought history to life for students at Riverview Elementary School. Photo courtesy of EEYP.

Right: Brian Petruskie poses in a cavalry uniform next to a horse equipment display from the Punitive Expedition dating from around 1916. Photo courtesy of EEYP.





Left: Jeff Jordan and Phillip Gibbons provided cavalry displays for both the Union and Confederate Army. Photo courtesy of EEYP.



Right: A World War I exhibit provided by Glenn Hyatt, which focused on the first use of science during warfare. Photo courtesy of EEYP.