



November 11, 2008

Otis Elementary students celebrate U.S. history

By *LESLIE BIXLER*
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FREMONT -- Fifth-graders at Otis Elementary School showed their knowledge and appreciation for military veterans Monday night in the school's gymnasium.

The theme of the evening was "History 101", at which students gave reports on different topics such as Women Air Force Service Pilots, dog tags, military cadence and U.S. Marine Corps camaraderie. Other students in the class sang songs including "Voices of Pride", "America" and "America the Beautiful".

The program began as the students who gave the reports filed onto the stage and each took a seat at a desk. Just as a normal class begins each day, they stood and said the Pledge of Allegiance. The students then presented their report to the audience of parents and veterans from a podium.

Fifth grade teacher Barb Moran started out by asking her students, "Who can tell me what Calvin Coolidge said about patriotism?"

Fifth grader Lauren Federico talked about what it means to be an American. "Never take for granted the privilege it is to be American," she said.

Moran said her fifth grade class has been giving this program for at least 10 years.

"We probably spent between three and four weeks preparing," she said.

However, Moran and retired cafeteria manager Mary Lou Cooper have been planning the program since this past summer. Moran said Cooper put together all the scripts for the children.

At the end of the event about 18 veterans stood up and introduced themselves and told what rank and branch of the military they served.

Otis School Principal Denice Hirt said this program allows the next generation to have knowledge of what the veterans have done, and Fremont resident Tony Price was amazed with the student's performance.

Price was one of the veterans at the program. His granddaughter is in the fifth grade at Otis, and he was impressed to see their level of education and appreciation. Price was a Specialist for the U.S. Army Military Police.

"We're all equal and the kids are being made aware of that," Price said.

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On the far left, fifth grader Julia Zucker gives her report on Women Air Force Service Pilots during the Veterans Day Program on Monday night. (Leslie Bixler/News-Messenger)