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Tuesday, June 7, 2011

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Look out below

John Greer Principal Dan Walder hurls a water balloon from atop the school last week after students participated in a Good Deeds Challenge, as part of the school's Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program. Students met the 1,400 good deeds goal, which meant Walder had to spend time on the roof. For his morning stint, Walder got a boost from Hoopeston Fire Department, using the aerial truck to get on the roof. He was also scheduled to spend part of lunch time on the roof. Armed with water balloons, Walder took aim at students. Also attending the event were Superintendent Hank Hornbeck and district PBIS coordinator Ann Penicook.

Dustin Hurt's Memorial Day talk

Editor's Note: Hoopeston Area graduate Dustin Hurt gave the keynote speech at the local Memorial Day service. Here is the text of his speech in its entirety.

Good morning! I want to thank you all for coming to this Memorial Day service. As I stand here before you today, I have to say it is truly an honor, yet humbling privilege to be speaking to you at such a distinguished ceremony.

For those of you who don't know me, my name is Dustin Hurt. I'm 18 years old and went to school at Hoopeston Area High School. I recently graduated and will be attending the University of Illinois this fall.

I have assisted the Color Guard as the trumpet player, playing Taps at veteran's services for the past year and a half. Recently, Steve Unger and the Color Guard asked me to speak and share my thoughts and experiences from what I have learned.

So, how exactly did I become the one to play Taps? About a year and a half ago, Bob Duffin called our band teacher, Mrs. Ronna, and asked if a trumpet player would be interested in playing Taps for a military funeral. My friend Noah and I jumped at it. I had never done it before, so I was nervous. It was the dead of winter, it was snowing, and it was freezing out. That was the first time I ever played Taps for a funeral. However, it went fairly smooth. Even though it was cold, my instrument didn't freeze, so it wasn't as bad as I thought it would be.

If you've never been to a military funeral, it's actually, a very somber and emotional experience. The minister will finish up with their portion of the service and turn it over to the Color Guard. The Color Guard will fold the American flag into the traditional tri-cornered shape - folded 13 times representing the 13 original colonies. The tri-cornered flag also honors the tri-cornered hats worn by the Patriots during the Revolutionary War. The folded flag is then presented to the family.

See SPEECH on other side

Speech continued from other side

After the flag presentation, the Firing Squad will fire off the traditional three rounds to honor the deceased. These

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three volleys come from an old battlefield custom when the two warring sides would cease hostilities to clear the dead from the battlefield. The firing of the three volleys meant the dead had been properly cared for and the side was ready to resume battle.

After the 3 rounds are fired by the Firing Squad, Taps is played either by a bugler or by a sound recording. It is sad to say, but today, there are so few buglers that most military services are unable to have Taps played live.

Taps originated in the Civil War with the Army of the Potomac. In July of 1862, after the bloody Seven Days battles, down and discouraged on the loss of 600 men, and wounded himself, Union Army Brig. Gen. Daniel Butterfield called his bugler into his tent. Butterfield didn't like the bugle call that signaled soldiers to put the lights out and go to sleep. He said it was too formal, and wanted to honor his men, so he worked out the melody of Taps with his brigade bugler Pvt. Oliver Wilcox Norton. When Norton played Taps for the first time on that clear summer evening, it was heard all across the countryside. In the next few days, buglers from other brigades asked Norton for the music. In 1874, Taps was recognized by the US Army, and has been the standard at military funerals since 1891.

The forces of Good and Evil have been around since the days of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Good and Evil presence will always be in our world in one way, shape, form, or another. However, our troops protect us from that evil which is present in our lives. While rogue countries and dictators do all they can to scare and intimidate us, our country and our troops come out on top. For the past ten years, society and the world have been afraid of things like suicide bombers and weapons of mass destruction, mainly by the hands of the Taliban, Al-Qaeda, and Osama bin Laden. However, our troops stormed the Middle East, crippled the Taliban and Al-Qaeda, and most recently, killed Bin Laden.

During a speech in Springfield, IL, Teddy Roosevelt once said, "Any man who is willing to shed his blood for his country is good enough to get a square deal afterwards. More than that, no man is entitled to. Less than that, no man shall have." To me, playing an instrument for 60 seconds is nothing compared to the cruelties of war experienced by the one I am playing for. I strongly appreciate what they have done for me. These men and women have looked evil in the eye and taken on the aggression of other countries, given their time and lives so that people like you and I may live another wonderful day in America without the threat of an attack.

Today- Memorial Day- we take time to remember our fallen veterans... our fallen soldiers. Reflecting on that, I ask you to take a moment and join me to consider this: Any and every person who has served in our Armed Forces has taken a solemn oath and is willing to pay the ultimate sacrifice for our

nation's freedom. I think back to just 1 year ago, when I was standing with fellow school mate and trumpet player Nick Grant. Nick and I played Echo Taps together for last year's Memorial Day service. As he played, Nick knew he would be leaving for the Air Force. In my graduating class, I have classmates who are leaving for the US Armed Forces. Just like you, I have friends and family who have served our country, some still serving, and others retired.

However, not everyone is fortunate enough to return to our native soil to live another day. There are those who served our country and paid the ultimate price with their life. Sometimes such a tragedy hits close to home, even in a small town like Hoopeston. Our school hallways were once walked by one such soldier- Army Private First Class Jeff Wallace. PFC Jeff Wallace was serving in Iraq, and died at the age of 20 as the result of a roadside bomb on May 24, 2005. Of course, any soldier, like our own Jeff Wallace, who lost their life fighting for America, didn't die in vain. They died valiantly and honorably, for all of us. We can honor Jeff and others like him by remembering them. While Jeff Wallace paid the ultimate price, his family continues to do so with all of the memories and the daily loss of a loved one. While no words or actions can compensate the Wallace family and others like them for their loss, all I can say is "Thank you."

As I prepare to go to college, anxiety and eagerness are abundant, but I also have doubts and hesitancy about being away from home. I have realized my doubts and fears are nothing compared to what our service men and women have encountered. Going to boot camp, miles away from family and friends, getting all your hair cut off, not knowing where their path in military service will take them, going away to a foreign land, the dangers, perils, and terror they may encounter, and the daily possibility of not coming back alive. Sometimes while waiting to play Taps, I think of the deceased soldier and wonder to myself, "What were their thoughts? What did they see? What did they think? What did they feel? What were their fears and experiences?" That truly puts things into perspective.

They have served our country well. Playing Taps for a soldier or veteran means they gave their country all they had to give. The least I can do is serve them by playing Taps. Playing TAPS gives me the opportunity to pay my respects and honor them. Taps is the last song and recognition these heroes will ever receive. It means a lot to me to be able to do this for them. I go about my daily life thanks to them. I feel proud knowing I am able to serve those who have served us and our country.

Bob Duffin has told me he has a live round for any speak-

er who gets long winded, so I think I better bring my speech to a close. I want to thank Bob Duffin, Steve Unger, and all the Color Guard for taking me under your wings and opening my eyes to what service and true patriotism is all about. Our veterans, fallen and living, are everyday, ordinary people. Some are policemen, farmers, businessmen, laborers, and unfortunately some unemployed or disabled. But don't look upon our veteran soldiers for who or what they are - honor them for what they did.

We're a free country, but we're only free because of the men and women in the Armed Forces who have fought for our freedom. Freedom is a right that was given to us by God, was obtained by those who died for a country they barely knew in the Revolutionary War, and preserved for us by those who have served and died for our country. We have kept our freedom because of the ones who have given the ultimate sacrifice and paid for our freedom with their blood. We can thank them for what we did yesterday, what we are doing now, and what we will do tomorrow. Today is not a day to be sad for the ones who have fallen, but a day to



Court Dispositions



Mayor, board wasting money on project

At a Board meeting on May 25, Mayor Prillaman convinced the Village Board of Rossville to grant an \$89,000 contract for the Summitt Street water project to a firm from Tolono. This is the same project that our employees could do for \$65,000, but the mayor said that our employees simply do not have the time. This is where the story gets more interesting. The contract calls for the contractor to install new 8" pipe from Gilbert to Earl Court and fill in the ditch over the new pipe. Then the village employees, who the mayor says are too busy, take over. Our employees will do all the landscaping. Rossville buys all the sand and rock at a cost of \$4,000. Our guys repair 10 driveways and alleys at a cost of \$175 each. This is \$1,750. Our guys repair six streets at a cost of \$600 per street for labor and materials. This is another \$3,600. All this work is to be done by village employees who the mayor insists are too busy to do the

Weather



Sunny today. High 94. Tonight, clear. Low 73. Tomorrow, hot. High 95, low 73.

For current weather conditions, call Hoopeston Weather Service, (217) 283-6221.

thank them, remember them, honor them, and celebrate the freedom which they have fought for and preserved for us. To all of those soldiers who paid the ultimate sacrifice, to the families, to those of you here and everywhere who have served, and to those entering the military to serve...

Thank you.

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