

VETERANS: Events feature music and interaction

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Miller related the history of Veterans Day itself, which began as Armistice Day. November 11 marked the armistice signed between Germany and the Allies of World War I, and was celebrated in several countries. The official United States holiday was renamed Veterans Day in 1954.

It is distinct from Memorial Day, she noted, which celebrates those who died serving their country. Miller said that the current holiday celebrates “veterans who are still with us,” appreciating “the freedom and opportunity to thank them.”

Miller explained briefly that some in service become prisoners of war (POWs) or missing in action (MIA). Fourth-graders presented a skit honoring them. A table was laid with a white cloth, red rose, Bible, candle, and other symbolic objects, while students narrated.

“You are in our hearts today and always,” a student read aloud as the skit ended.

Members of the Armed Forces and the Americans they serve practice numerous religious and spiritual traditions. Later, the principal clarified why a symbol of Christian faith was included but no others.

“No preference for one faith was intended and likewise, there was no disrespect

intended for the others,” Warburg explained via email. “We didn’t want to disrespect the POW/MIA families by altering the script.”

The script used was “the specific one that veterans organizations utilize regularly across the country.” Different elements may be incorporated in future uses of the skit.

“It truly was a community effort, but the lion’s share of the work and vision came from Sara [Miller].”
— Joan Warburg

Stated Warburg, “It is my hope that we represent all of our veterans in a respectful and honoring way each year, while keeping the learning fresh for our students.”

The assembly continued on to an Armed Forces medley of songs. The crowd applauded the veterans present according to which branch they’d served in. Then the kids sang, “We are American every day, living the American way,” stomping and clapping in time with the music.

A video depicted war imagery and news footage, listing statistics of how many American soldiers have been wounded or killed. Photos of the Washington Memorial and the somber Vietnam Memorial Wall were given prominence.

John F. Kennedy’s famous speech played in the background: “The energy, the faith, the devotion which we bring to this endeavor will light our country and all who serve it, and the glow from that fire can truly light the world. And so, my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you — ask what you can do for your country.”

Onstage, Warburg described the reality of so many kids whose parents are overseas. We honor veterans, she said, but “we also have to honor their families. The families also sacrifice.”

She thanked organizers including Miller, physical education teacher Ashleigh Thomas, and counselor Kate Kuitert.

“Our SPTC organized the breakfast,” Warburg explained later. SPTC is the school’s equivalent of what used to be called a PTA, or parent-teacher association.

“It truly was a community effort,” she said, “but the lion’s share of the work and vision came from Sara.”

A veteran commented, “They did such a good job. They didn’t glorify war, they focused on honor... it was




PHOTO BY JERRY BALDOCK

The Missing Soldier Table presentation at the SMS/SHS Veterans Day observance was powerful.

just beautiful. These kids will remember this.”

Later in the day, students at Sisters Middle School and Sisters High School hosted

another gathering to honor veterans at the Sisters High School auditorium, featuring music from the band and choir programs.



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