OKANOGAN VALLEY GAZETTE-TRIBUNE

Friday, November 14, 2008

'Freedom is not free'

Emily Hanson
Staff Writer

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Photo by Emily Hanson

Sgt. Josh Evans, a 2004 Tonasket High School graduate, gave a speech to the audience at the Tonasket High School Veteran's Day assembly in which he described some of his experiences in the army. Evans said he has spent just under two years in combat in Iraq since he enlisted in the Army on Nov. 24, 2004.

Photo by Emily Hanson

Veterans and their families around Tonasket loaned memorabilia to Tonasket High School to be laid out on tables in the front hallway for the Veteran's Day Assembly on Monday, Nov. 10.

TONASKET - Veterans were honored at the Tonasket High School Veterans' Day assembly on Monday, Nov. 10.

"Freedom is not free" was the theme of the assembly held in the THS auditorium. The assembly began with a performance of "The Star Spangled Banner" by the drum and bugle corp. Then Maria Olea Perez read her poem "Thank You (to all our soldiers)"

"Thank you for fighting in the war, to stand up for your country," Perez read the last verse of poem. "I'm sure with all your effort, you'll go down in history."

The THS choir then sang "Single Voice, Solitary Flame" by Jerry Estes and "America the Beautiful" by Joyce Eilers. Sergeant Josh Evans, a 2004 THS graduate and current member of the United States Army, then spoke to the audience about some of his experiences in the army. He stated that he spent just under two years in combat in Iraq. He finished his talk by giving the students of Tonasket High School some advice.

"If you don't know what you want to do with your life and you don't want to trade one school for another, join the military," Evans said. "I recently re-enlisted for another six years. If I make a career out of it, I can retire at 38; I don't know many civilians who can say that."

Aaron Doner read his poem "Soul of America" finishing with the line "Thank you veterans, for letting us be proud to be Americans."

The freshman class officers then presented a check for $1,137 to the U.S. Armed Forces Legacy for their project on Highway 97. The freshman received the honor of presenting the Legacy with this check because they won the two-week long coin drive at THS. During their acceptance of the check, Dale White said he had been to many Veterans' Day presentations throughout the state and that the Tonasket High School Veterans' Day assembly beats all the rest.

Another poem, this one titled "Stand for the Flag" was then read by Hannah Schell.

"So stand for the flag, because they stood for you. Honor those who have fought and remember the lost," Schell read.

After a performance of Roy Ammann's song "Vietnam" by Brock Hires, Kristany Fitzthum read her poem "Marching Down the Muddy Road."

"Everyday, for you our brave and proud, we fold our hand and pray, that as you march down that muddy road you lift your feet, for Freedom is a heavy load," Fitzthum read.

After each read a verse of the poem "No Freedom is not Free," the ASB officers each collected a rose which they then presented to veterans in the audience. A power point presentation titled "Honoring our Local Heroes" in which photos of Tonasket veterans were shown ended the assembly.