

# Features



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## Puxico Veterans Day Assembly, Guest Speaker Kyle Cox, Quilts of Valor, VFW Teachers of the Year

NOVEMBER 13TH 2024 BY DEE LOFLIN

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The Puxico R-8 School District held their annual Veterans Day Assembly on Monday, November 11, 2024.

Each year the school creates a History of Veterans Day video which features local veterans and was played prior to the beginning of the assembly.

The Puxico Band played the Star Spangled Banner, the audience and students participated in saying the Pledge of Allegiance and the presentation of colors where both the US flag and Missouri flag were presented.

Guest Speaker was Kyle Cox. He served as an Army Combat Engineer and is currently serving in the Army Reserved. EMT Crew Chief at Stoddard County Ambulance District.

He stated that he had a tremendous respect and gratitude for other veterans. While he was in the 6th grade is when the tragedy of September 11, 2001 happened and he felt a sense of urgency to join and serve in any way possible.

Two Quilts of Valor were presented during the assembly. Mr. Ron Clinton and Mr. Rick McLean were given two beautiful quilts. Karen Graham and Debbie Asher presented the quilts along with V.F.W. Commander Duane Martin.

They are heroes who served our country with distinction. Their commitment to protecting our freedoms has not gone unnoticed. Your courage in the face of danger, your resilience in tough times, and your unwavering patriotism inspires us all.

You've shown us what it truly means to put others before yourself. This Quilt of Valor represents our community's collective gratitude. It has been lovingly crafted by local volunteers who wanted to show their appreciation for your service. Each piece of fabric, every stitch, carries our thanks.

As we present you with this quilt, we want you to know that it is more than just a blanket. It is a warm embrace from all of us. It is our way of saying "thank you" for the nights you spent away from home, for the hardships you endured, and for the sacrifices you made. May this quilt bring you comfort on cold nights and serve as a constant reminder that your service and sacrifice will always be remembered and honored. We're proud to call you one of our own. Mr. Clinton and Mr. McLean, thank you for your service to our nation.

The V.F.W. Patriot's Pen and Voice of Democracy contests provide students with a platform to express their thoughts on what it means to be an American and the importance of honoring our veterans. The winners we recognize today have demonstrated remarkable insight, eloquence, and dedication in their entries. Also being recognized are the V.F.W. Teachers of the Year.

Patriot's Pen Winners

1st Place - Layla Stewart, 2nd Place - Aaliyah Whitaker, 3rd Place - Anabelle Allen

Voice of Democracy Winners

1st Place - Layla Hale, 2nd Place - Jude Lawrence, 3rd Place - Kirston Delong

V.F.W. Teachers of the Year.

FW Elementary Teacher of the Year Mandy McMillan.

VFW Junior High Teacher of the Year Kelly Smothers.

VFW High School Teacher of the Year Hunter Placher.

Just remember freedom is not free. It is earned by those who have put on the uniform and answered the call to protect and defend the values we hold dear: liberty, Justice, and the pursuit of peace. Our veterans have given so much, from battles they fought to the time spent away from their families, to the personal sacrifices that continue long after they have returned home.

Today we not only honor their service, but also to reflect on the deep gratitude we owe them. Their commitment to our country and its ideals is a testament to the strength and resilience of the human spirit.

**To all veterans, we thank you! You are our true heroes.**

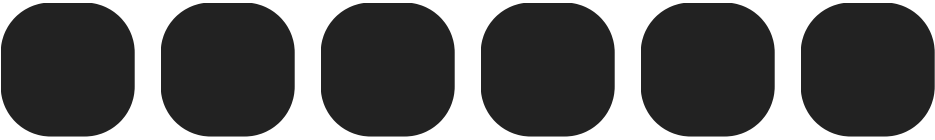
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