

Comal Independent School District

NEWS RELEASE

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Texas Army National Guard members Visit Comal ISD middle schools

Students at Canyon and Church Hill middle schools got a real life history lesson recently as local members of the Texas Army National Guard visited their campus.

Soldiers spent an entire day at each school playing games in the gym, eating lunch, and holding question and answer sessions in different classrooms.



These soldiers, who are set to deploy to destinations like Iraq and Afghanistan by the end of the year, were honored in a ceremony at Canyon High on Sept. 3.

"My students absolutely loved it," Canyon Middle principal Patti Vlieger said. "The respect level they had for the soldiers was tremendous."

Church Hill Middle assistant principal Chelsy Merrill, a former Marine, was equally impressed.

"The reaction of our students has been great," Merrill said. "I was very impressed with the thoughtful questions they asked."

Students asked the soldiers questions like why they joined the military, what they eat, what kind of guns they shoot, why the United States is in Iraq and how long soldiers have to stay away from their kids once they're deployed.

"I think this really hit home for a lot of these kids," said CHMS Texas history teacher Cassie Perkins. "On Sept. 11, we talked about our military and

what we're doing over there, but I'm not sure if all of them really understood. This makes it realistic."

CHMS student Isaiah Scott's father is currently stationed in Afghanistan.

"I know what the soldiers are going through because I worry about my dad dying every day," Scott said. "It's a tough thing to live through, but I believe in what my father and these soldiers are fighting for. I think since they came and talked to us my classmates understand what's going on overseas with our military a lot better."

Students at both campuses plan on sending care packages and letters to the soldiers while they are deployed.

"Most of these soldiers have children this age or younger, so we really enjoy talking to the kids," said National Guard Captain Joe Sereno. "It makes us feel good to do something like this."

Sereno, who has served two tours in Iraq, said the care packages the students are planning on sending are greatly appreciated.

"It's hard to put into words what it means when a young student puts a package together and send it to you," he said. "When you receive something like that from a total stranger, you know it's sent from the heart."

Both Vlieger and CHMS principal Dani Baylor said the Texas Army National Guard soldiers are welcome back at their campus any time.

"We are absolutely planning on doing this again in the future," Vlieger said. "I think it's a great experience for everyone involved."

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IN PHOTOS:

CMS National Guard Soldiers:

Members of the Texas Army National Guard spent most of the school day on Oct. 7 at Canyon Middle School, playing games and holding push-up contests in the gym, eating lunch and holding question and answer sessions in classrooms. Here, soldiers AJ Morin and Christa DeAngelo talk to students in Kendra Bowden and Julie Wiley's class.

CHMS Soldier Vest:

Church Hill Middle student Jayde Davey gets an assist from Texas Army National Guard soldier Alethea Sims as she tries on an IBA Bulletproof Vest.