

# Comal Independent School District

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **CLHS JROTC students have amazing trip to Washington D.C.**

Winning was on the minds of the Canyon Lake High School Army JROTC Leadership Team when it traveled to Washington D.C. this summer to compete in an online question and answer contest.

What CLHS students learned during the trip took on a much broader meaning.

After qualifying first at the regional level and becoming one of only 45 teams from around the world to earn a chance to travel to Washington D.C., the four CLHS teammates quickly found out the five-day experience wouldn't only be about being part of a quiz team.

"We were able to experience something some people never get to during their entire lives," said student Philip Carr. "We went to the nation's capitol, visited all of the monuments and memorials, and hung out with friends the entire time. I wouldn't trade it for anything."

Student JD Sanders said the group encountered many different emotions visiting the different landmarks in Washington D.C.

They visited the Arlington Cemetery, and the Jefferson, Washington, Lincoln, FDR, World War II, Korean War, Vietnam Veterans, and Women in Military Service for America memorials.



“Visiting the memorials really made you think,” Sanders said. “To give your life for your country is the ultimate sacrifice. I think a lot of us were moved reading all the names on the different memorial walls.”

Fellow CLHS team member Tinson Mallory agreed.

“It was a somber experience but a very educational one,” Mallory said. “A girl from another team found a member of her family’s name on the Korean War Memorial wall and it was emotional watching her stencil it on paper.”

The group also visited the Washington Monument and the Smithsonian, and viewed the White House from a distance.

Along the way they met ROTC students from around the nation and as far away as Europe.

“I never visited Washington D.C. before, and it was incredible,” said team member Cody Smith. “I’ve always lived in the south, so actually seeing some of the things I’ve learned about in school and seen on television all these years was amazing.”

When the competition did finally get underway, the team finished one correct answer away from making it to the second round.

“We were so close,” Carr said. “We had 30 seconds to answer each question, and on the final one we realized our answer was wrong before we pushed the button. When we tried to push the button for the correct answer, the time ran out a fraction of a second before. It was a little bit disappointing when we realized that question would have been the difference, but we realized pretty quickly that just making it here was such an accomplishment.”

The three current CLHS seniors, Carr, Mallory and Smith, won’t be eligible to compete this year, but Sanders, a junior, will be the team captain.

“We were already talking on the way back about preparing all the younger students to get back to this level,” Smith said. “We want them to get back to Washington D.C. and go even further than we did.”

All four team members said they plan on seriously considering the military after high school.

“They gained so much self-confidence,” said CLHS instructor, retired Army Lt. Col. Michael Collier. “There were multiple college recruiters there, and our students know they were among the very best JROTC units in the world. They know they belong with the cream of the crop, and that’s a foundation that can help them build very successful futures.”

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IN PHOTO: Canyon Lake High Army JROTC students (l-r) Philip Carr, Tinson Mallory and JD Sanders, along with teammate Cody Smith (not pictured), were one of only 45 leadership teams worldwide to take part in a quiz competition worldwide in Washington D.C. over the summer.