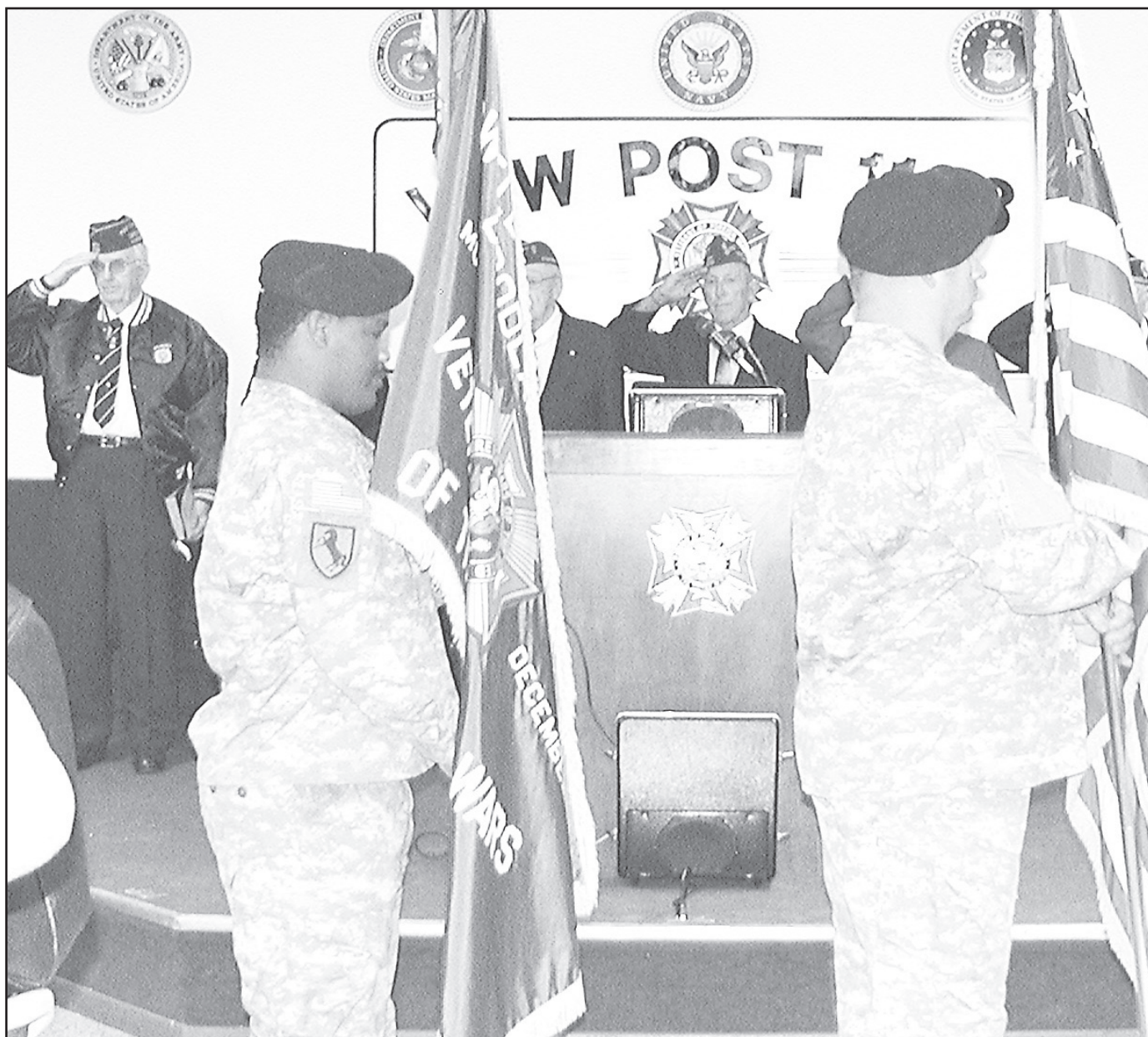


The Community Page

Soldiers past and present celebrate Veterans Day



Specialists Jermain Murray and Bryan Varney of the Kansas National Guard presented colors during a Veterans Day ceremony Nov. 12 at the Veterans of Foreign Wars Hall in Goodland. Saluting in the background were Chet Ross, a retired Air Force chaplain, and Post Commander Bill Selby.
Photos by Ramona C. Sanders/The Goodland Star-News

By Ramona C. Sanders
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About 100 Sherman County residents celebrated Veterans Day during the annual service on Nov. 12 at the Veterans of Foreign Wars Hall.

The national holiday was Nov. 11, a Sunday, but the federal holiday was observed on Monday with banks and many offices closed.

Quartermaster Joe Wahrman said the Goodland Veterans of Foreign Wars Post has been holding the service since 1986 when he was the post commander. The American Legion Auxiliary helps organize the event.

"We started it because we're supposed to have a program to honor our veterans, those who have served and those who are serving now," said Wahrman, a Vietnam War veteran.

Today, three men and one woman from the 170th Maintenance Company of the Kansas National Guard are serving in the war zone of Iraq, said Staff Sgt. Mark Reasoner, non-commissioned officer in charge at the Goodland Armory.

Reasoner said four men recently returned from Iraq and in all, 11 have been sent to the war-torn country since Operation Iraqi Freedom began in 2003. Two served two tours of duty. One, Sgt. Ernie Gonzales, was injured, and another, Derrick Lutters gave his life.

Reasoner recognized those men and women during the ceremony, which also included awarding of prizes for the Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary's Voices of Democracy speech contest and Patriot's Pen essay contest. Voices of Democracy is a high school competition,

while Patriot's Pen is for junior-high students.

Devin Mangus won first place and Brennen Clouse second in the Voices of Democracy contest with their five-minute videotaped speeches. The winner is eligible to compete in regional, state and national contests, with the ultimate prize a \$30,000 college scholarship.

In the Patriot's Pen essay contest, D.J. Yarbrough took first, Carly McCracken won sec-

ond place and Cortney Cowan placed third.

The free ceremony featured presentation of the colors by Reasoner and Specialists Jermain Murray and Bryan Varney from the National Guard unit. A report on Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary activities, a scripture reading, prayer and music followed; A reception was held before and after the program.

The event was a time for

veterans of all branches, wars and types of military service to "come out to visit and meet some of their good old comrades," said Wahrman.

Veterans Day was first celebrated as Armistice Day, proclaimed by President Woodrow Wilson in 1919 after World War I. It became a federal holiday on Nov. 11, 1921, and was changed to Veterans Day in 1954 by a proclamation from President Dwight D. Eisenhower.



Staff Sgt. Mark Reasoner helped Specialists Jermain Murray and Bryan Varney of the Kansas National Guard prepare for the presentation of colors Nov. 12 before a Veterans Day program at the VFW Hall.



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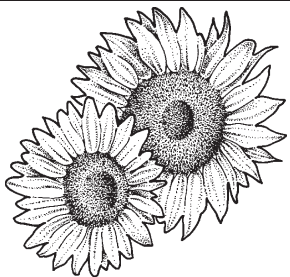
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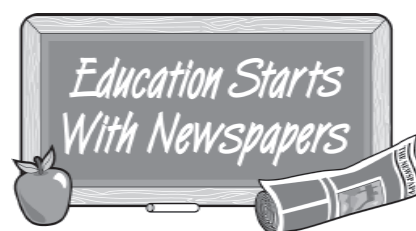
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