ILLINI BLUFFS HIGH SCHOOL

TIGER TIMES

Veterans Day Edition

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Illini Bluffs Veterans Day Ceremony 2025

Tiger Times' staff honors the veterans in their family

By Staff

Every year, there is a celebration on Nov. 11 for the people who have served our country. It could be one of your parents; it could be your aunt, uncle, or great-grandfather. Regardless, most of us have a person in our lives who was a veteran, and more than likely, have had family members and ancestors who have served as far back as the First World War, when Veterans Day was first conceived. The first Veterans Day was called Armistice Day and was recognized on Nov. 11, 1919, when people started celebrating the veterans responsible for ending World War I. Then, it turned into celebrating the people who served as veterans for all wars. Armistice Day turned into Veterans Day on June 1, 1954.

Veterans Day should be celebrated because it honors the brave men and women who served our country. They have sacrificed their time with their families, their safety and, in some cases, even their lives to serve and protect our country and keep us free. Celebrating Veterans Day is showing our respect, appreciation, gratitude and recognition to the veterans who have served our country or are serving our country currently. This is also a reminder to remember the ones who have died for our country, to never forget their courage and their bravery.

Every year, IB has a Veterans Day ceremony. This ceremony is a planned assembly that is dedicated to honoring people who served and are serving in the United States Armed Forces. For this ceremony, we have a Veterans wall that was made with the help of Mr. Teel's shop class. The wall consists of wooden picture frames of veterans in our community. This wall is displayed in the trophy cases so people can see everyone while walking past. We also have a veterans luncheon. This takes place in the elementary school cafeteria after the ceremony. Honoring our veterans is an important part of the ceremony because we believe that their service to our country should be recognized.

Veteran Jim Taylor - Max Hersemann

For me, I love celebrating Veterans Day mainly because my great-grandpa, Jim Taylor, was in the Army during the Vietnam War and was a big part of my life. Growing up, I saw my great-grandpa a lot, and he would always tell me these stories about what happened in the war and on the battlefield. He really means a lot to me, and I am thankful that he went out there and fought for our country, as I am grateful to all veterans out there.



Veteran Bernard J. Swan - Cadie Johns

A veteran who is very important to me is my great-uncle, who I am not related to, but I grew up with and spent hours talking to about his time in service before he passed. He served in the Army during World War II, and was in combat in the Philippines. During his time in combat, his hearing was damaged in one ear due to a bazooka being fired by his side, and he always wore hearing aids because of it during the time that I knew him. Despite his injuries, he was always happy to talk about it.

His funeral was a beautiful ceremony, where they shot their guns into the air and folded up an American flag to be placed on his casket. He was always important to me, and I loved spending time with him. I'm forever grateful that I was able to know him, as he was such an inspiration for me and seeing how happy it made him to have served made realize how much we owe to our veterans. I am proud of my family, I'm proud of my uncle and my many generations of grandpas who served. I am proud of everyone else who has ever fought or worked for our country because of it.

Veteran Alan Natschke Jr. - Romann Natschke

Alan Natschke is special to me because he is my dad. He served in the Army and the Navy. He served in the Army from 2001- 2003 and served in the Navy from 2006-2013. He received the Combat Service Ribbon, Global War on Terrorism Ribbon and National Defense Ribbon. Veterans mean a lot to me because I live with one, but that's not the only reason; they risked their lives to serve and fight for our country, so they mean a lot to me.



What's something you would like to say to our veterans?



Neyla C.

"I would like to say thank you so much for dedicating your life and time to us and our country. Thank you for giving us freedom and liberty."

Shaylee W.



"Thank you for your service. Even though being a veteran means you could sacrifice your life and well-being, you did it for the sake of our country. Thank you again, and keep doing what you do."

Luke S.



"Thank you for dedicating your life to us and our country. Thanks for waking up every morning and going to your base and sacrificing your life. It means a lot."

Grant T.



"Thank you for sacrificing time away from your family and friends, and thank you for protecting our freedoms and the rights under the Constitution."

Veterans on staff at IBHS

By Ella D.
Managing Editor



Helena Price

Mrs. Price's service in the Air Force had a rather heart-warming beginning. "My sister had joined the Air Force a year before I had, and she unfortunately didn't make it through because she had a severe injury, causing her to leave during basic training," Mrs. Price said. "I thought that I would follow in her footsteps and be that person to make it through for her." Working for the government and being a part of a branch comes with the knowledge that there will be sacrifices that need to be made. Price mentioned that she learned a lot of responsibility from her time in the Air Force. "No matter where you are or what you are doing in the world, if you're able to take responsibility for your own self, anything can be overcome and allow yourself to be set up for success." Mrs. Price is loved by so many at Illini Bluffs.



Joe Williams

Many know Mr. Joe Williams as the smiling face that greets them at lunch, knowing each student by name and bringing a smile to their faces on difficult days. What many may not know is that Joe is a veteran who put his life selflessly on the line to keep and preserve our freedoms. "The Army taught me how to be a good citizen," Mr. Williams said. "I served in the Army for three years as a combat military policeman; we did things like direct traffic through towns and from fields back to the town." Mr. Williams shows that good citizenship every day, having a positive impact on everyone he meets, "He has taught me how to have a positive outlook as well as helping lighten the mood during difficult situations making them easier to get through," high school principal Mr. Josiah Martin said.



Zachary Siadek

Over the years that Mr. Siadek has been in the service, he has held two Military Occupational Specialties: Combat Engineer and All-Source Intelligence Analyst. "The biggest sacrifice I had to make was time and the condition of my body," Mr. Siadek said. While his high school classmates were going to college, he was training. The lasting marks left by physical strain included hearing loss, tinnitus and knee and back pain. Although his body was bruised and broken, his pride was at an all-time high. The Marines instilled in him discipline, attention to detail and resilience. "It made me into the person I am today—for better or worse," Mr. Siadek said. Now, as a teacher, he finds that those lessons serve him well. "The stressors that would normally affect teachers don't really impact me. The discipline, work ethic and bearing that I learned from the Marines have most definitely helped me here."



Neil Rinkach

Mr. Neil Rinkach is a middle and high school custodian who can frequently be found helping out in various capacities around THE school, but many students might not be aware that he is also a veteran. Mr. Rinkach went into the Navy in 1991, at his parents' suggestion. He served in the Navy for six years, repairing radios, radars and planes. According to Mr. Rinkach, the military taught him "respect," "how to be responsible and dependable," and "about different cultures." During his time in the military, he visited many places around the globe, including: Thailand, the Philippines, and Japan. He particularly enjoyed learning about the traditions and cuisine of the countries he served in. In 2018, he was diagnosed with AML leukemia. He beat cancer, and his treatment was paid for by the VA, so not only is he a hero, but also a cancer survivor.

Staff cont. on P3

Poems to veterans from Illini Bluffs middle schoolers

"Veteran's Sacrifice," by Jordyn F.

They stood with courage, strong and true,
And faced the unknown for me and you.
With hearts of bravery, bold and kind,
They left their fears and doubts behind.

Through days of struggle, nights of fear,
They showed dedication year by year.
With strength and honor, they stood tall,
Ready to answer duty's call.

Their sacrifices will not be in vain,
For freedom is worth more than we can explain.
Their selfless hearts, their will to serve,
Showed a strength that we all can learn.

So on this day, we proudly say,
Thank you, veterans, for all you gave away.
Your courage lives in all we do,
And our deepest thanks will always be true.

"For the Flag," by Kensington M.

“For the flag” the soldier repeated,
“For family, friends, and fate,”
For freedom they fought for us,
Their sacrifices were great.

So celebrations are held,
Holidays are made,
To honor what they went through,
On those hard, long, days.

So when you cross a veteran,
Thank them for freeing you,
For your rights and safety,
And everything you can now do.

They show us what it means to be brave,
Their sacrifices will never fade,
But their courage and kindness will always stay,
Not just on Veterans Day.

"A Tribute to Our Veterans," by Avery G.

We honor our veterans, brave and true,
For all the amazing things they do.
Their courage shines like stars in the night,
They stand for our freedom and what is right.

They made sacrifices to keep our land free,
So future generations could live peacefully.
Their service is a gift that will always remain,
A symbol of strength through hardship and pain.

Freedom is a treasure we hold close and dear,
Their bravery helps us to overcome fear.
The flag waves proudly, telling their story,
Their honor lives on in our nation’s glory.

We remember the heroes and all they gave,
Their legacy lives on, strong and brave.
With gratitude in our hearts, we thank you today,
Dear veterans, we honor you in every way.

"Sacrifices," by Kyleigh H.

Making sacrifices isn’t something everyone has to do,
But you made one that required heart, one that was loyal and true.
You sacrificed so many things to keep this country safe and secure.
You truly have a heart of gold, one that is pure.

One thing you had to sacrifice was the home you once knew.
You had enough bravery to go to a place that was unfamiliar and foreign to you.
You selflessly left your home, putting life aside,
And served for a country that pleadingly wept and cried.

One of the hardest things you had to leave behind
Was your family who truly loves you, and is kind.
You had to go to a place that felt far from them
So you could protect everyone's freedom. You're a ruby, truly a gem.

We thank you for your service and for everything you’ve done.
Your sacrifices are why freedom is shining bright like the sun.
We can never fully thank you for the hope and peace you’ve given to us all,
But we can continue what you’ve started, and make sure that what you’ve done stands tall.

Veterans on staff at IBHS cont.

Christopher Mackesy

Mr. Mackesy, a familiar face in the lunchroom who also has a son here in high school, served in the United States Army for just over 30 years. During the time he spent serving, he was a fire support specialist, supply sergeant and later promoted to senior supply sergeant. In these jobs, he had to use qualities like leadership, organization, accountability, responsibility and enforcement of logistical procedures. Since retiring in 2014, he has taken on many volunteer roles, from assisting with data entry at Peoria Historic Society to helping at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. In addition to volunteering, he serves as a finance officer at The American Legion Post 35 and earned "Legionnaire of the Year" in 2023.



Mackesy meeting his oldest child for the first time after deployment.

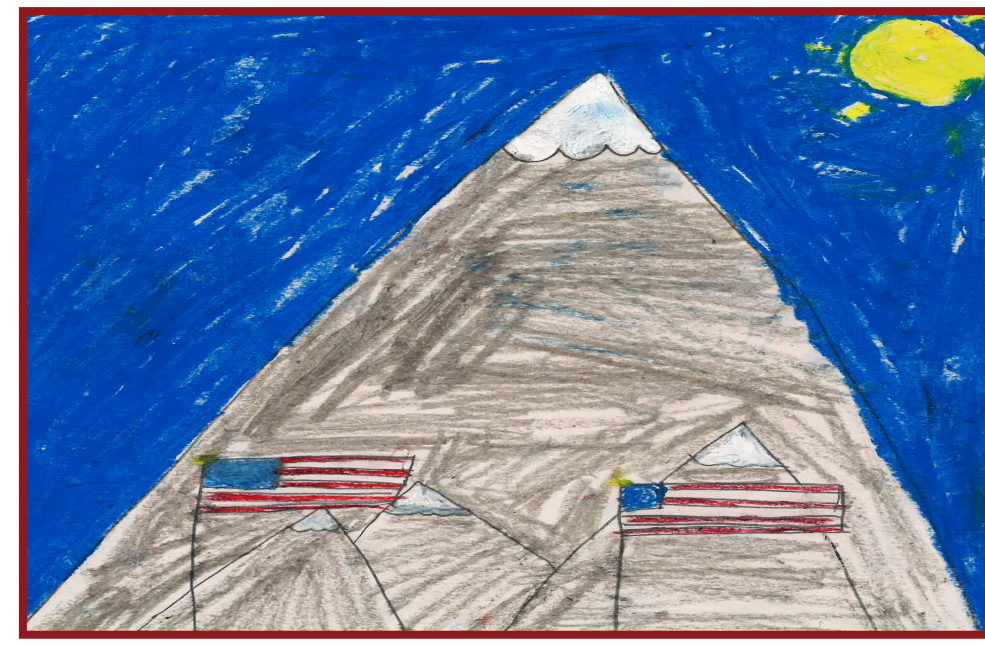
Photo gallery from Veterans Day 2025

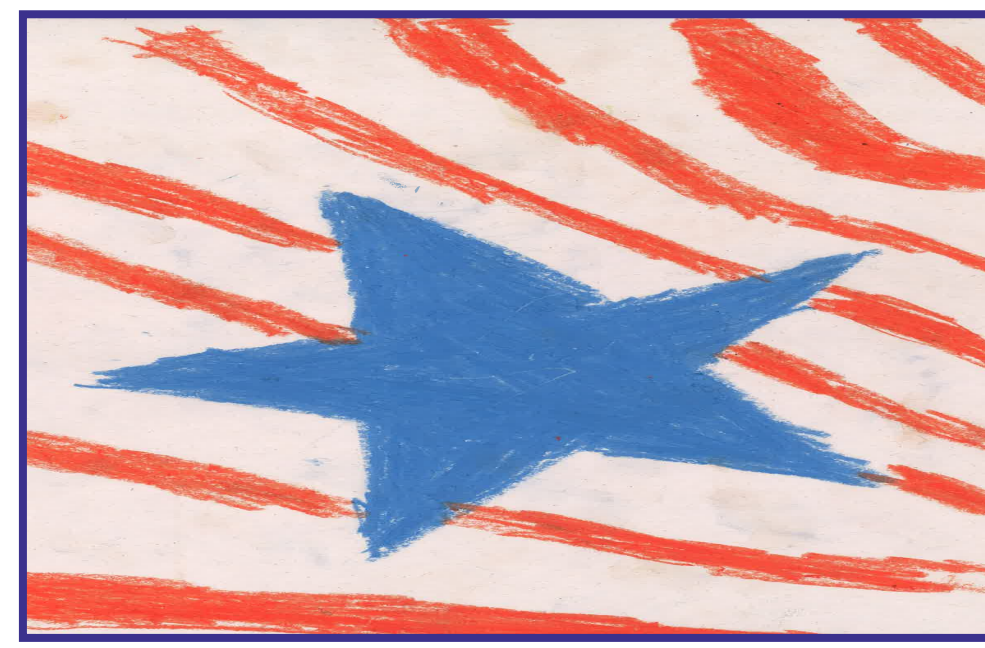







Artwork from Illini Bluffs' elementary schoolers for Veterans



Veterans Day Crossword

E U O E M H T T C M
Y B E C I Z H V Y B
G P M B L Y A F E R
L W I F I G N R P A
I K A F T C K E V V
B V M B A J D E E E
E E E L R Y D D T R
R O R L Y T D O E Y
T H I T N R Y M R E
Y I C I O L G X A P
L A A P D G B M N G
S E R V I C E K S K

Find the following words in the puzzle

VETERANS
THANK
AMERICA
FREEDOM
BRAVERY
SERVICE
MILITARY
LIBERTY

STAFF

Editor-in-Chief.....Addy D.
Managing Editor.....Ella D.
Graphic Designer.....Izzy L.
News Reporter.....Cadie J.
News Reporter.....Taylor H.
Voice Reporter.....Emma M.
Voice Repoter.....Elyse C.
Sports Reporter.....Maxx H.
Sports Reporter.....Brody L.
Sports Reporter.....Romann N.
Copy Editor.....Ryleigh D.
Cartoonist .....Kasper G.

SOCIALS

Illini Bluffs Tiger Times

@ibhs_tiger_times

@tigertv327

Land acknowledgement

We would like to acknowledge the Indigenous people who originally inhabited this land on which we now live. The Peoria Tribe, an Algonquian-speaking people of the Illinois Confederation, were the original inhabitants of the land that now includes Timber Township, now Glasford.

Culturally, the Peoria practiced a nature-centered religion and were known for being open and welcoming. They often accepted other cultures into their tribe, married into other tribes, adopted white children, and welcomed former enslaved people into their community.

The Peoria were pressured to move from their ancestral land between 1818 and 1832 when the Treaty of Edwardsville was signed, and white settlers began to aggressively move into their territory.

We cannot undo the past, but we can shed light on it to give them the acknowledgement they deserve.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE, VETERANS! WE APPRECIATE YOU!