



**By Jan Rahn**

*Managing Editor*

Saying thanks never seems like enough. Residents of Perkins County and the Wallace area came together on Veterans Day, Friday, Nov. 11 to pay respect and honor our nation's veterans who have sacrificed so much for the freedom we enjoy and take for granted.

Programs hosted by respective American Legion Posts and Auxiliary Units were held at Perkins County High School and Wallace High School during the morning.



Following advancement of colors, dedications were held, music was provided, and students from both schools were honored—Boys and Girls Staters at PCHS and Voice of Democracy winner at Wallace.

A free bean feed at the Legion Hall in Grant followed the program, while coffee and rolls for veterans and their spouses wereserved at the school in Wallace afterward.

Russell Hixson of the Veterans Service Office in Grant delivered the speech at Perkins County High School. Hixson is replacing former secretary Roxanne Hiatt until he takes over at the Veterans Service Office upon Whitey Shirley's retirement in the near future.

Hixson began his speech by suggesting the term "national debt" be Googled, which brings up search results for 28.7 million websites.

"Very few bring up the biggest national debt of them all, that which America owes to her veterans," said Hixson.

He singled out Marine Sgt. Dakota Meyer to whom America owes an enormous debt for not leaving his comrades behind in a heroic deed in an Afghanistan valley. It was heavily populated with enemy insurgents who outgunned the American soldiers. Meyer found his friends and comrades shot to death and with assistance carried them out. He received the Medal of Honor from President Obama for his heroism in his sacrifice to his fellow soldiers.

Since our nation's founding, more than one million American men and women have given their lives for their country, said Hixson.

"Our debt to these heroes can never be repaid, but our gratitude and respect must last forever."

He pointed out the many sacrifices made by veterans in being separated from their families. “It is not in the nature of America’s warriors to complain,” Hixson quoted, “Warriors endure. Warriors make do with less. Warriors finish the job, no matter how hard, no matter what is asked.”

He said that’s why the American Legion exists—to serve veterans, their families and the communities.

“Veterans need each other, but, more importantly, our country needs our veterans,” he said. Hixson pointed out the various programs through which the American Legion shows its support for America’s heroes.

“You can show your support simply by saying thank you to the next veteran you meet,” commented Hixson. “You can show your support by hiring a veteran in your workplace, visiting a VA hospital or donating to a veterans program.”

He pointed out that it’s smart of businesses to hire veterans and to ensure their careers do not suffer if they’re deployed. Homelessness is another issue affecting veterans.

“We can do better. We must do better,” said Hixson. “Fortunately, veterans don’t ask for much. Benefits are a mere drop in the bucket compared to the financial and human cost of war—but nonetheless, we still owe them.”

Hixson said Americans should ask themselves if they are serving veterans even half as well as the veterans have served the nation, and that debt should never be forgotten.

“Through their blood, service and sacrifice, veterans have given us freedom, security and the greatest nation on earth,” said Hixson. “It is impossible to put a price on that—we must remember them, we must appreciate them.”



