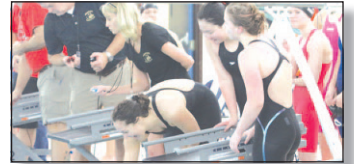


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Blaine swimmers dominate section meet.

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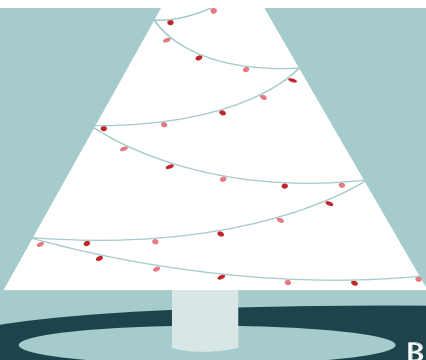
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Salute to our veterans



Blaine High School honored local veterans Nov. 11 during the high school's annual Veterans Day ceremony in the Field House. Photo by Paige Kieffer

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Blaine High School honored local veterans Nov. 11 during the high school's annual Veterans Day ceremony in the Field House. Photo by Paige Kieffer



Air Force veterans, and individuals who have a family member who served in the Air Force, stand during an armed forces salute Nov. 11 in the Field House at Blaine High School. Photo by Paige Kieffer

Blaine High School honors local veterans

By Paige Kieffer
Staff Writer

Congressman Tom Emmer and Anoka County Sheriff James Stuart joined Blaine High School students to honor local veterans during a Veterans Day assembly in the high school's Field House Nov. 11.

The event, which is organized by staff member Steve Guider, was attended by more than 100 veterans who served in all branches of the Armed Forces from World War II to today, in addition to over 1,000 students, staff and area residents.

Blaine High School Student Council President Bianca kicked off the ceremony.

"Across this great country, and throughout the world, Americans will pause this Veterans Day to honor our brave fighting men and women, who



Congressman Tom Emmer speaks at the annual Blaine High School Veterans Day ceremony Nov. 11 in the Field House. Photo by Paige Kieffer

for 230 years have underwritten our freedom by their duty, honor and selfless service," she said. "To all our veterans we have a simple heartfelt message: Thank you. Thank you for your unwavering service in peacetime and war here in this nation and throughout the world."

The Blaine High School Orchestra and Choir played patriotic songs throughout the ceremony, including "The Star-Spangled Ban-

ner," "God Bless America" and "America the Beautiful." The ceremony was emceed by KARE 11 News Reporter Boyd Huppert.

Emmer attended the event to thank local veterans for their service in the U.S. Armed Forces.

"It's an honor to serve in congress, but it's really special to be invited to be part of your school's celebration to honor and never forget

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Retired Vietnam War nurses Army Nurse Corps Capt. Lynn Bower, Air Force Reserve flight nurse Dorothy "Dottie" McKinley and Navy nurses Jean Mahaffey and Kay Bauer, in no particular order, bring out the American flag Nov. 11 during a Veterans Day ceremony at Blaine High School. Photo by Paige Kieffer



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Local veterans pose for a picture Nov. 11 after the annual Blaine High School Veterans Day ceremony in the Field House.

Photo by Paige Kieffer

Blaine High School recognizes local veterans

Continued from page 19

our military veterans,” he told the audience. “We’re pretty lucky to have been born into this country. I’ve had an opportunity to travel a bit, and I can assure you that after having visited places like Africa, Vietnam and Cuba, we have it pretty good. Is our country perfect? No, but then what is? Not all Americans have an easy life, but compared to the rest of the world and in specifically to some of the places I just mentioned, we

have it pretty darn good. And why? Why do we live in the greatest free country the world has ever known? It’s because we’re free. It’s because we have the freedom and opportunity in this country to be the best we can possibly be, but it’s also because of America — the nation we were fortunate enough to be born into — has been willing to protect the light of freedom here and all around the globe. America has been willing to protect freedom, but it’s

the few, the brave Americans who have served our country in times of war and peace that made and make it possible for you and me to live safely and to exercise our freedom here at home and all around the world. That’s what this day is all about.”

The ceremony honored members from each branch of the armed forces.

Blaine High School staff who are veterans and students who will enter the military after graduation also

performed a wreath-laying ceremony before the students took a ceremonial Oath of Enlistment.

Sheriff Stuart, who served in the Marine Corps and has three children serving in the Marines, gave the keynote.

“There are many days throughout the year we recognize,” he said. “Thanksgiving is a time where we pause and give thanks for the things we have, but Veterans Day is a time where we pause collectively to give thanks to the people, the heroes who made it possible to have those things,” Stuart said. “I’d like to say a personal thank you to all the veterans gathered here today: Thank you for preserving our way of life and our freedom that I have always known. I’d also like to say thank you to the loved ones who have a family member who has served. Some are now gone, for you have paid a very high price for our freedom. The heroes who are serving or who have served are forever worthy of our support and should remain in our



Anoka County Sheriff James Stuart, a Marine Corps veteran, speaks at the annual Blaine High School Veterans Day ceremony Nov. 11.

Photo by Paige Kieffer

prayers and our hearts.”

After the keynote, 99-year-old World War II veteran Stan Nelson was recognized for his service in the Navy, in which he took part in the D-Day invasion on Omaha Beach.

Last year Blaine High School had a reunion where Nelson reconnected with fellow sailor Peter Fantatone, who died April 25.

The school tried to reconnect Nelson with another fellow sailor, 95-year-old Jack Claiborne from Tennessee, but Claiborne was unable to attend the ceremony. Claiborne sent Nel-

son a World War II hat, and a voicemail from Claiborne was over the intercom in the Field House.

“My heart will be there with you,” Claiborne said.

The two said they hope to reconnect soon.

Afterward, a Battlefield Cross Ceremony was followed by a firing of volleys by members of the Sgt. John Rice VFW Post 6316 in Blaine.

“Taps” was played while Nelson lowered the American Flag, which was then folded and presented to Stuart.

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Blaine High School students, who have enlisted in the Army, take a ceremonial oath of enlistment Nov. 11 during a Veterans Day ceremony.

Photo by Paige Kieffer