

JCHS Veterans Day Assembly 2022 Sees Large Turnout

by Dalton Brown, News Reporter
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JERSEYVILLE - Jersey Community High School held its 2022 Veterans Day Assembly on Thursday, Nov 10 at 9 a.m. in the JCHS Main Gym, and the assembly was well-attended by students, veterans, and their families alike. Guest speaker Lieutenant Colonel Anthony K. Krueger, Jr. spoke about his military experience, and school officials thanked attendees for showing their support to veterans in the community.

The assembly began with two student speakers, Brooke Stockstill and Thomas Kuehnel, who presented a brief history of Veteran's Day. Two more student speakers, Gavin Goff and Mackenzie Jones, took turns presenting a tribute of appreciation for veterans.

"Our veterans are extraordinary people. They're loyal, dedicated, true, and brave," Goff and Jones said. "We owe our freedom - and our very lives - to our veterans who served in uniform. Our veterans should be celebrities. They're exceptional - no other group compares."

Another student, Emily Woolsey, recited a short poem before the JCHS Band played the National Anthem to a standing crowd with hands on their hearts.





The school's FFA Officers then commenced a flag-folding ceremony, with each fold symbolically representing a different aspect of America.



Next, the JCHS Choir performed the theme song of each branch of the U.S. Armed Forces - Army, Coast Guard, Marines, Air Force, and Navy. As each theme was played, members of the audience who were veterans of each particular branch stood as their song was played, while the audience applauded and cheered them on.





Guest speaker Lieutenant Colonel Anthony K. Krueger, Jr. then took the podium to share his perspective on veterans in our everyday lives, including future veterans who may be current JCHS students.

“I’m glad to be here today to recognize the many veterans of this community and the sacrifices that they’ve made on the part of our state and our nation,” Krueger said. “The people that wear the uniform now, and those who have worn the uniform before, are just ordinary people who have been on extraordinary adventures. They’re the folks seated on the gym floor, they’re people that you see at Sinclair’s. You pass them on the road driving in the other direction.

“Some of you students sitting up in the stands today will someday serve, and that’s going to be a great thing,” he continued. “While there are sacrifices involved, what you get out of your time serving will be far more valuable.”



He then went on to share his own experience getting involved in the military - including “how I got into the uniform and what I’ve gotten out of it,” he said. He joined the National Guard shortly after graduating from JCHS in 1993, first enlisting as an Intelligence Analyst and later becoming Intelligence Superintendent. He started out part-time in the military and described going full-time as the best career move of his life.

“I took on a full-time job in a unit, and that is the single best decision that I’ve ever made in my working career. It opened up a lot of doors for me,” Krueger said. “I’ve deployed to 10 continents on four continents ... I got to fly, and I got to go on combat missions over in Yugoslavia and Afghanistan.”

Later on in the speech, he addressed the students directly.

“Someday, all of you sitting up there are going to finish school, and maybe you’ll leave your hometown, and you might not see these friends and teammates and classmates that are sitting next to you right now later on very often. It’s hard to find that kind of camaraderie that you have with school teams and school activities later on when you’re an adult,” he said. “Now I’ve seen some of my classmates here today ... nothing’s going to compare to those friendships in the future, but for me, and for many other people, our Guard family comes the closest to replicating that.”

He closed by saying that “without question, we live in the greatest country in the world - a country which relies on the service of outstanding men and women,” and thanked everyone for their support.

After the guest speaker’s speech, the Jersey Community High School Band and Choir performed “America the Beautiful” together. JCHS Principal Dr. Jason Brunaugh then thanked several individuals, including guest speaker Krueger, English teacher Brad Kimble with his help organizing the event, all of the student presenters, JCHS Band Director Erin Bittles and Choir Director Margaret Bear, the school’s faculty, staff, and FFA representatives, as well as the veterans in attendance.

“Finally, I want to give all the thanks and glory to our veterans. Thank you so much, from the bottom of our hearts, for your service,” Brunaugh said. “Let us not forget all our veterans have sacrificed and that our Freedom is not Free.”

He encouraged attendees to look at the new Wall of Honor outside the JCHS gym honoring veterans, which has been maintained and updated by JCHS Dean of Students Mindy Woelfel and Lisa Kolkmeyer and her students.

