

CANYON COURIER

West Jeff Middle honors veterans past and present

By Barbara Wickham

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West Jefferson Middle School's eighth-grade orchestra and band opened the annual Tribute to Veterans with a festive compilation of service songs.

Vietnam veteran Steve "Grizz" Adams, known for his nature photography, gave this year's keynote address. He thanked not only veterans for their service, but also teachers, nurses, police and firefighters.

"There are many ways to serve," he said. "A sense of service is important for the strength of our community, and it makes you a better citizen."

Adams comes from a legacy of military service, including World War II, and his father was part of the Navy's recovery operations at Pearl Harbor. His uncle was a bomber pilot and was shot down twice.

Adams shared with the 600-plus audience members that he always planned to serve.

"It was simply the right thing to do," he said.

He encouraged students to vote when they are of voting age.

"It is an honor and a privilege that not all have in the world," he said. "But please be an informed voter."

Social Studies teacher Joe Cushing initiated the Wall of Remembrance to honor fallen service members related to the school. He led a "penny wars" fundraising effort to purchase the five service flags presented during the ceremony. Yellow-ribbon pins were worn by every student.

Students wrote letters of appreciation, thanking veterans for serving and protecting the country that were given to the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 12009, American Legion Post 2001, the Wounded Warriors Project and patients at the Veterans Administration Hospital in Aurora.



The Wall of Remembrance honors fallen service members related to WJMS students.