

New Tech Institute Students Experience Veterans' Stories First-Hand during Annual Hoosier Veterans Consortium.

Since 2014, students in the Innovative Perspectives class at New Tech Institute have participated in the Hoosier Veterans Consortium to bring the stories of local veterans to life. Innovative Perspectives integrates Freshman English and United States History content into a course that explores the literature and history of America since the Civil War.

New Tech Institute students experience Project-Based Learning as the primary means of instruction, and Innovative Perspectives projects provide students with a comprehensive look at eras from history. For instance, as students explore the trends and events of America in the 1920s, they read F. Scott Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby. The culminating product for this project has students create a radio program that integrates news, fashion and an interview with Fitzgerald in a radio program.

During the "America at War" project, students explore armed conflicts from World War II through present-day, and their project culminates with the Hoosier Veterans Consortium. With this event students welcome 20-25 veterans from these conflicts to our school, where they interview the veterans and capture their stories to be documented in the newly-opened Evansville Wartime Museum and/or The Library of Congress. Students learn real-life history from these armed conflicts, while they integrate English/Language Arts skills during the interviews and Technology while they record and later transcribe the interviews.

Each year, we have had veterans from World War II, Korea, Vietnam, the Gulf War, and recent military action in Iraq and Afghanistan. One of the original teachers, 1LT Ernie Griffin, is a First Lieutenant in the Indiana Army National Guard. While Griffin has moved on to a leadership position at a local high school, current teachers Bonnie Alcorn and Ryan Jones have continued the event.

During the first year, students interviewed a 93-year-old World War II veteran, named "Bill." He had served in the Air Force and Army, and shared his stories. Students took his picture, and mailed a transcript of his interview to him. Sadly, Bill died about three months after the first Consortium. His family was grateful for the stories he shared, as they were not familiar with many of the stories in the transcript. Three of our students who interviewed Bill attended the funeral, and the pictures taken by our students was enlarged and framed at his memorial service. In this way, learning transcended facts from a textbook; the learning became a real-life connection to one of America's heroes that our students will treasure.

We are grateful for the opportunity to honor the service of our Armed Forces, and we are always looking for veterans willing to share their stories with our students.

Media Coverage

<http://www.tristatehomepage.com/news/local-news/students-get-first-hand-history-lesson-from-veterans>

<http://www.tristatehomepage.com/news/local-news/high-school-students-interview-veterans/676424561>

