

HISTORY: Local students find lessons in veterans' experiences

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Sherry Wright, who helps organize veterans events in Franklin County, said her father often shared stories about his three brothers who were killed during service — two in World War II and one in Korea. Her father, Marshall Ball, recently died.

His death brought another reminder how important it is to listen to veterans' stories, Wright said.

"They have the story, and unless they passed it on from generation to generation like my dad did, it's lost," Wright said. "We're going to lose a generation of history."

To save veterans' stories, a group of Ottawa high school and middle school students recently worked with 12 local veterans to compile a PowerPoint presentation of their histories and experiences. The event was part of Make a Difference Day.

Talbott said he has seen the numbers of World War II veterans dwindle. He was the youngest of 11 in his bombing crew; now, there are only three left.

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Cari Halliburton, intergenerational specialist with the East Central Kansas Area Agency on Aging, helped connect the students and veterans. She has worked with students and senior citizens to compile personal histories as part of the Life Stories project, but this event was geared just to military veterans.

Veterans of all ages and all recent conflicts shared their stories, Halliburton said.

"The kids learned a lot and gained a new respect for these vets," she said.



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