

From the North 40

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I'm an aide at Coffee Creek Elementary School and one of the perks is going on field trips. Last Friday we met with Medal of Honor recipient James Taylor at the Coffee Creek/Trinity Center Cemetery to put flags on the graves of veterans to honor them for Memorial Day. Afterward, Taylor treated us for lunch at the Mini Kat.

This was Coffee Creek Elementary's second outing with Taylor, so he quizzed the students on the themes of his last talk with them. The students did quite well, though I did hold my breath hoping nobody would "act up." I am pleased to report that the children were on their best behavior.

We split up into small groups to put flags on the graves of veterans. I went along with two kindergartners to help them find veterans. The 5-year-olds were more interested in the rocks that outlined some of the graves. They also had me read to them what was on the more elaborate or interesting markers.

Meanwhile, the older students were doing a thorough job of planting flags. It was approaching the time to leave for lunch when the two kindergartners realized that they still had theirs. Desperately, they asked me, "Can I put it in this one? How about this one?"

Time was up and everybody was crowding around Taylor as he passed out little flags for the students take home before we headed off to lunch. Now I was desperate to get their flags in the ground. So, if anybody visits the cemetery and sees a flag on a small marker with the initials "EC" or on the marker of an unknown stagecoach robber who died sometime in the 1860s, please don't be offended. It was two kindergartners with their hearts in the right places.

This was a special field trip for me personally. I thought about my grandfather who was a bombardier and flew on missions over Italy during World War II. Only once he let me ask him questions about his part in the war. I also remember him being adamant about not saying "Happy Memorial Day" (or "Happy Veterans Day"). I simply gave a few moments of silence to thank all our veterans — and Grandpa.

This week includes a Black Tie event at Coffee Creek Elementary at 5:30 p.m. Thursday, May 28. The students will display art work and perform ballroom dancing. Trinity Center Elementary School will be performing their spring play, "Through the Eyes of a Child," for two performances on Friday, May 29. The morning show will be at 10:30 a.m. and the evening show at 6 p.m. Both will be held at the I.O.O.F. Hall.

A dedication ceremony for Colonel James Swett will be held at 3 p.m. Saturday, May 30, at Redding Municipal Airport. Swett was a World War II Medal of Honor recipient who lived in Trinity Center.