

# 4-H youth tour Hall of Honor

*Museum at Mt. Vernon  
Airport continues to grow  
since opening last year*

**BY TIM JOHNSON**  
SENTINEL NEWS STAFF

MT. VERNON — Local 4-H youth learned a valuable history lesson while gaining a new appreciation for the sacrifices of local veterans at a visit to the veterans Hall of Honor this weekend.

Local resident and Hall of Honor organizer Clarence Duckworth gave a guided tour of the hall and museum at Mt. Vernon Outland Airport on Saturday to members of the Woodlawn 4-H Club.

He showed the 4-H youth, leaders and parents the names and photographs of a few hundred Jefferson County veterans before taking them through the Hall of Honor museum to explain the origins of the military memorabilia, uniforms and artifacts inside.

Duckworth was accompanied by fellow Hall of Honor organizer R.D. White, a retired Lt. Colonel and World War II veteran, who shared stories of his own war-time experiences.

"It makes us grateful to all of them," said 4-H Leader Melanie Spangler, who made her first visit to the memorial since it opened

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last summer.

White explained the origins of two of the museum's more impressive items, a couple Japanese rifles that he took home from the battle of Iwo Jima after a suicidal banzai charge by outnumbered Japanese troops.

Numbering about 500, the Japanese force attempted to destroy an American B-29 bomber that was the first to land on the island.

"They were wanting to get up there and destroy it, and they came right up to our outfit," White told the group in attendance. "I picked those two rifles up — the guys that used them didn't need them anymore — and I brought them back."

Encased along with the rifles was an Imperial Japanese flag that a paratrooper had once worn around his waist under his uniform. It had three holes in it, which White said were the result of flak from an anti-aircraft gun.

"You fold that flag in the center, both directions, all three of those holes will line up," Duckworth said.

The Hall of Honor has been adding new items and new



Sentinel Photo/TIM JOHNSON

**HISTORY LESSON** — Clarence Duckworth, RIGHT, gives a guided tour of the veterans Hall of Honor to Woodlawn 4-H youth at Mt. Vernon Outland Airport on Saturday. Also pictured, FROM LEFT, are retired Lt. Colonel R.D. White, Emma Caserotti and her father, Phil Caserotti.

names every month since it opened. Duckworth said the airport should be able to make room for more as the need presents itself.

"This is a work in progress, and it will continue to be in progress as long as there is someone to take care of it," said Duckworth, who served in the U.S. Army in the early 1960s.

The 4-H members are doing their part to support today's servicemen and women. They recently "adopted" an active-duty soldier named Bryan, who is stationed in Afghanistan. The youth write him letters, which he answers. They send him care packages with snacks and other civilian perks to help keep his spirits up.

"It gives them a feeling for what he's doing, what's he's giving up for us," Spangler said.

The Hall of Honor museum is scheduled to be open to the public from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Wednesdays, but Duckworth said residents can call him or White to have it opened up on other days.

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