

— THE — CHERRY HILL SUN

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A salute for new soldiers

Event to be held for new graduates who join Armed Forces

By **ROBERT LINNEHAN**
The Cherry Hill Sun

The young men and women of Camden County who graduate high school and decide to join the Armed Forces will have a special night devoted to their service.

The first High School Enlistment Recognition Ceremony will take place Tuesday, June 2, at the Mansion in Voorhees Township. The event will honor high school graduates in Camden County who have chosen to serve in the Armed Forces.

Dr. Kenneth Hartman, a current Cherry Hill board of education member, said 48 of the 55 graduating high school seniors in Camden County who have dedicated themselves to the armed services will be attending the event.

Hartman, a veteran of the U.S. Army from 1980 to 1990 who reached the rank of first lieutenant, said the ceremony will give the new recruits a send off they truly deserve.

"Not only do I have a deep personal commitment and appreciation for these young people who will be going to serve their country, we're doing this because these youngsters are willing to stand

guard for their nation," he said. "It's because of them that their classmates will be able to go to schools this fall."

Terry Ruggles, a news anchor for NBC 10, will emcee the event. Dom Giordano, a WPHT talk show host, will be the featured speaker during the night, Hartman said.

Eagles legend Vince Papale will be the night's keynote speaker. He will address more than 200 visitors to the event, Hartman said, which will be attended by the 48 students, their families and a number of other special guests as well.

A two-star general will be present, Hartman said, as well as a Marine Corp band from the Marine Corps Base in Quantico, Va. Sitting at every table will be at least one Armed Forces veteran, Hartman said, as well as one high school counselor from a Camden County high school.

Jennifer Grimaldi, a school counselor at Haddonfield Memorial High School and past president of the Camden County School Counselors Association, secured one school counselor from every high school in Cam-

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Lion leap

Cherry Hill West's Michelle Hermanns jumps after scoring a run against Cherokee. The Lions to the Chiefs, 10-2, and were eliminated from the South Jersey Group 4 playoffs.

TONY MARQUIS/T

Of 'Night' and Earth Day

Elie Wiesel's book, the environment and poetry meet come together in eighth-grade students' projects

By **AUBRIE GEORGE**
The Cherry Hill Sun

In the vast art studio at Beck Middle School, eighth-grade students took visitors through a museum exhibit they created to honor Holocaust Remembrance Day, Earth Day and National Poetry Month — all at once.

The students built "poetic memorials," working through the month of April to construct four-piece exhibits using themes of resiliency and human nature.

The exhibits focused on the

novel "Night" by Elie Wiesel — a story based on the author's experience as a young Orthodox Jew who was sent with his family to the German concentration camps at Auschwitz and Buchenwald during the World War II.

"This is really a dark, heavy topic," said eighth-grade language arts teacher Mandy Baker, who organized the project. "And this was a good way to really break it down and show respect for it."

All of the students started out by writing poems incorporating

words from "Night," which was used to create a symbol — that was made out of recyclable materials.

Baker said that each student was asked to sign up for one of four groups — the literary group was charged with editing and publishing the poems; the art group had submitted, the construction group was in charge of building the exhibits, the aesthetic group put the finishing touches

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den County to attend, Hartman said. There are three graduates of the Cherry Hill School District who will be attending the event, Hartman said. Ben Swander, 18, a soon to be graduate of Cherry Hill West, said a staff sergeant of the U.S. Marine Corps asked him to attend the event out of respect for him and for everyone in the Marines. Swander will begin basic training in October.

"I decided to join the Corps to serve my country, help out my family and for the financial help," Swander said.

Steven Wister and Mark Baptiste from Cherry Hill East also will be attending.

All five branches of the Armed Forces will be represented at the event. U.S. Army Lt. Col. Ronald Tuczak was one of the first recruiters Hartman said he went to when the idea for this night was in its infancy.

Honoring these young men and women, Tuczak said, is an important thing to do during this time. The event will showcase the students and their families and the important journey they're about to embark upon.

"I envy their journey. I'm proud of their decision to serve. The opportunities are there and it's up to them to seize the day and take full advantage of what the Armed Forces have to offer," he said. "Nothing worth earning comes easy. When they walk across the graduation field at basic training, tears will roll down their parents' eyes and they'll be so proud of what their sons and daughters have accom-

plished. We help them find their inner strength."

Retired Lt. Col. Colonel Al Bancroft - active duty in the Marine Corp for 33 years until 1991 - saluted Hartman for creating the celebration. Bancroft was instrumental in recruiting veterans to come to the celebration.

There are about 55 veterans organizations in Camden County, he said, and 40 will likely be represented during the night. Bancroft serves as the director of Military Affairs for the county's Department of Veterans Affairs.

"I feel strongly about this because when you have these graduation ceremonies you celebrate the magna cum laude, the people that do well scholastically," he said. "You don't hear about those that obviously got good grades but also decided to serve their countries. At the age of 17 or 18, that's a big obligation. It's a great opportunity to thank them and their families. We didn't have this years ago."

One of the most heartbreaking aspects of the night, Hartman said, is it's limited to only Camden County graduates. Funding was limited - with most of it being provided by Hartman himself - but several organizations stepped forward and asked if their graduates could also attend.

Hopefully next year other counties and school districts will follow suit and put on a similar event, Hartman said. However, any graduate attending a branch of the armed services is invited to attend the free college fair being held on the same day at The Mansion from 4-6 p.m.

About 12 colleges have signed on to speak with the future armed forces members, he said. Representatives will show the graduates how they can use funding available through the G.I. Bill.

If a business or private citizen would like to donate, please visit the event's Web site at ourcommunitysalutes.com.

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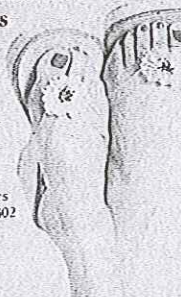
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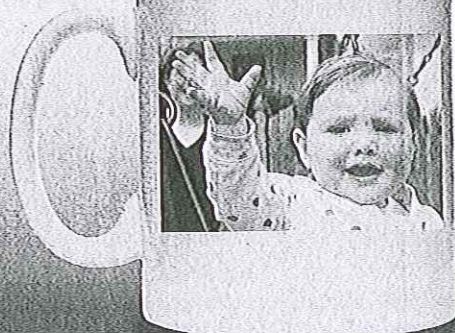
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